

# THE ENGLISH REVIEW

MARCH 1912

## Amiel

By Robert Bridges

WHY, O Maker of all, madest thou man with affections  
Tender above thyself, scrupulous and passionate?  
Nay, if compassionate thou art, why, thou lover of men,  
Hidest thou thy face so pitilessly from us?  
If thou in priesthoods and altar-glory delitest,  
In torment and tears of trouble and suffering,  
Then wert thou displeas'd looking on soft human emotion,  
Thou must scorn the devout love of a sire to a son.  
'Twas but vainly of old, Man, making Faith to approach thee,  
Held an imagin'd scheme of providence in honour;  
And, to redeem thy praise, judg'd himself cause, took upon him  
Humbly the impossible burden of all misery.  
Now casteth he away his books and logical idols,  
Leaveth again his cell of terrified penitence;  
And that stony goddess, his first-born fancy, dethroning,  
Hath made after his own homelier art another;  
Made sweet Hope, the modest unportion'd daughter of anguish,  
Whose brimming eye sees but dimly what it looketh on;  
Dreaming a day when fully, without curse or horrible cross,  
Thou wilt deign to reveal her vision of happiness.

## Two Poems

By Richard Middleton

### LULLABY.

Ah, little one, you're tired of play,  
Sleep's fingers rest upon your brow.  
You've been a woman all the day,  
You'd be a baby now;  
Oh, baby, my baby!  
You'd be my baby now.

Perhaps you had forgotten me,  
Because the daisies were so white,  
But now you come to mother's knee  
My little babe to-night;  
Oh, baby, my baby!  
My baby every night.

To-morrow, when the sun's awake,  
You'll seek your flowery fields again,  
But night shall fall and for my sake  
You'll be a baby then;  
Oh, baby, my baby!  
My little baby then.

And you'll grow big, and love will call,  
Happen you'll leave me for your man,  
And night times when the shadows fall  
I'll greet as mothers can;  
Oh, baby, my baby!  
As only mothers can.

But now, my little heart of May,  
Lie closely, sleep is on your brow,  
You've been a woman all the day,  
You'd be my baby now;  
Oh, baby, my baby!  
My little baby now.

## TWO POEMS

Now in the calm of eve,  
When the glad sun has quaffed his cup and fled,  
And the last sunbeams leave  
Faint wine-stains overhead  
Spilt from day's gleaming flagon, I rise up  
To glory at the banquet that is mine,  
Oh, my beloved, is not the night our cup,  
Are not the stars our wine?

The lips of lovers win  
Joy from the feast of day, but, oh, the night  
Drives all their cares away,  
And fills them with delight.  
She is the friend of lovers, at her board  
They may drink deep of kisses without fear,  
She gives them sweetness keener than a sword,  
Joy like a sudden spear.

Night comes, and I am glad  
That I was born a lover; she disbands  
Her shadows, and my passions, new made mad  
Riot in wanton lands.  
Between the roses and her starry sky  
She weaves herself a silver veil of dew,  
Her magic is upon us as we lie,  
And, oh, I cannot breathe for kissing you!

# The Beechwood in March

By Henry Bryan Binns

Nor only simple things and good  
Are heard and harboured in the wood,  
For I am sure the Lady Beech  
Hath wicked wiles within her reach,  
And something of the serpent's guile  
Lurks in the lady's lovely smile,  
— For which, indeed, we love her more  
And find her lovelier than before.

As every woman is a witch,  
So there's no beech-tree but doth stitch  
Her gleaming phosphorescent vest  
That fits so featly to her breast,  
With subtle surreptitious grace:—  
Those hundred roots that interlace  
Into a tangle weird and green,  
Methinks they ought not to be seen  
Working their witch-craft:—I would wonder  
To see the conies dwell thereunder  
But that they have the guarantee  
Of their extreme simplicity.

For once, when I was on the hill  
In middle March, taking my fill  
Of idleness, when all the air  
Was grey with rain, I grew aware  
Of unimagined mysteries  
Transacted by the slender trees.  
— O, they were very tall and slim  
And strangely nipped, and a dim  
Milkily coloured light they shed  
About them, flushing pallid red  
From the copper floor: wan, waxenly,  
Their glimmering presence haunted me.

## THE BEECHWOOD IN MARCH

They stole with a usurping grace  
Possessive, all the common space,  
That none besides might dwell therein—  
Except the cony-folk, the thin  
Lichen that gossamers their skin,  
And the green vivid moss that sips  
The dripping of their finger-tips.

On the edge of a pool I stood :  
One beech-tree leaned out of the wood  
And kneeled upon the water's brink,  
Neither to gaze in it nor drink,  
But in its mirror to confess  
That quintessential wickedness  
Which darkles, visible to me,  
About divine virginity.

For I perceive that Dian ever  
Anew replenishes her quiver  
Of sudden-slaying shafts that smite  
The foolish lover of delight  
Amid his sentimental dream  
Of girlish joys, with the fierce gleam  
Of joys that were the overthrow  
Of mighty spirits who long ago  
Worshipped her, and with strange desire  
Were stricken, while her ghostly fire  
(Moon-cold that is) of chastity  
Seduced them from the mastery  
Of noon-day splendours to essay  
Adventures sibylline and grey,  
Outreaching from a certain good  
To wonders whispered in the wood  
By the bewitchèd loveliness  
They loved and never might possess.

I left the pool, and to and fro  
On the naked ground began to go,  
Knowing how all the wood was fraught  
With silence perilously wrought  
Of many a man-rejected thing : —

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I heard again the Pan-pipes sing  
The bubbling ecstasy of earth,  
With clear unintermitted mirth :  
I heard the music, elder than  
All the philosophy of man,  
Laughing within my soul to see  
Beauty so delicately free  
To work her mischief and to play  
Exquisitely with our clay.

I deem—enamoured of the Sun  
And not her myriad and one  
Creatures—that Earth, with eager breath,  
Recks little of their life and death : —  
Is not her bosom over-rife  
With the tumultuous births of life ?—  
But she, with that relentless smile  
Leonardo painted, broods, the while  
She images with mighty will  
The forms that shall her dream fulfil.

However dear and gentle seem  
The eyes of Mother Earth a-dream,  
Yet may you glimpse within those eyes  
The unmistakable surmise  
Of that old savage lioness  
She is for all her gentleness.  
It is fierce freedom that she gives  
To every gentle life that lives—  
Freedom to kill with tooth and wit  
Whatever being hinders it :  
And upon him that hinders her,  
The smile she casts is sinister.  
Complacent he : little he knows  
The passion of her heart that flows  
Throughout the strangely permanent  
Pattern of her world-intent ;  
Or how the secret of her plan  
Was hid in him ere he began  
To thwart her, and presume to be  
Less splendid than the destiny,  
Smiling, she fashioned in his flesh :

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And still she smiles while, in the mesh  
Of his own being, grows entangled  
The mean, profane, the strangely-fangled  
Fancy of life wherewith he tried  
If she would not be satisfied.

While there be simple things—and good  
To eat—that harbour in the wood,  
Menacing images galore  
Pass to and fro upon its floor  
With the dread might of oaths forsworn,  
Dreams unbegotten, babes unborn.

# Among my Books\*

By Frederic Harrison

## PART IV

### GREAT BIOGRAPHIES.

If twenty well-read men and women were asked to name the greatest Biography in ancient and then in modern literature, nineteen of them would reply off hand—Why, Plutarch's *Lives* and Boswell's *Johnson*. Everybody has read these two books from their earliest days; and the highest authorities since Montaigne, Henri IV., Shakespeare, Macaulay, and Carlyle, have agreed that these two are the supreme masters of the fascinating and popular art of writing Lives of famous men.

Montaigne tells us that the *Parallel Lives* alone might form a good education; Henri IV. said, Plutarch was his very conscience to guide him in his public duty; as to Shakespeare, in his three ancient plays, Plutarch was what Holinshed was for his "Histories." A French critic calls the *Lives* one of the noblest books of which humanity has to boast; it offers us "an encyclopædia of the ancient world." And it has been said of old—"if all other books were destroyed, we could still recover some picture of antiquity provided Plutarch survived."

And as to Boswell's *Johnson*, similar praises are lavished. "Boswell," says Macaulay, "is the first of biographers. He has no second. He has distanced all his competitors." Again he adds, though he was a bore, a toady, and a fool, he has written "one of the best books in the world." And Carlyle, who understood Boszy much better than Macaulay, says that his portrait of Johnson "is a more free, perfect, sunlit and spirit-speaking likeness than for many centuries had been drawn by man of man. Scarcely since the days of Homer has the feat been equalled: indeed, in many senses, this also is a kind of Heroic Poem." And Carlyle

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does not scruple to say of what he calls the *Johnsoniad*, that Boswell's book, though it is but a memoir of the conversation of one man, will give us more real insight into the *History of England* than twenty books of professed historians. And much the same has been often said—and is more truly said—of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*.

That being so, says some reader in a hurry (all readers nowadays are in a hurry), why talk about Plutarch and Boswell? Have you anything new to tell us about them? Certainly not! I reply; for I have no pretension to be either scholar, or critic, or professor, or one having authority in things of the mind. All that I have to say about Plutarch, or Boswell, or any one else I mention in these stray papers is: Read them, read them again! My tachydromic and polymathic friend says: I have read them, read them years ago!

Well! we know that; every one has read them in early days; but have you not forgotten all but a few anecdotes, hurried over the wise rules of life, canons of judgment, pregnant maxims of Plutarch the just moralist and of Johnson the downright judge? Of course everyone remembers the story of Aristides writing his own name on the shell, or of Alcibiades cutting off the tail of his pedigree hound, in order to get into the *Daily Mail* of Athens, or of Alexander and Bucephalus, or of Alexander and Diogenes in his tub, just as every one knows about Alfred's cakes. But the point I am asking is this: Have you read Plutarch since your school days? Do you really know all his thousand and one pictures of the antique world so well, that you never turn to him now in later life? I strongly suspect that few persons could honestly say as much.

It would be quite to misunderstand the scope of these occasional notes of mine to look upon them as offering any criticism or essay about famous books, much less as promising anything new about well-known writers. Like the Sapphic but needy knife-grinder, story I have none to tell; nor even so much as any new light of criticism. My only purpose is to tell what I have been reading myself, why I am still in my old age enjoying the old books. As I keep on saying, I am nothing of a scholar and never have been a great reader. But still in my years of leisure and retirement, I am reading over again the famous books of one's youth—am enjoying them hugely, and perpetually find in them things I had forgotten or missed.

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There has been of late a happy revival of interest in Plutarch and other writers of Imperial times, whom the pedantry of the latter half of the nineteenth century condemned for their poor Greek and their doubtful Latin. But Mahaffy, and Bury, and Dill, and Warde Fowler, Mackail, Vernon Arnold, H. E. Butler, and others are making these most interesting writers known; and so Plutarch, and Lucian, and Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus, Apuleius, Petronius, Ausonius, Symmachus, and Claudian, and the author of *Pervigilium Veneris* are become again living and familiar voices to us to-day. And we are beginning to see, with no little surprise and misgiving, that these mystics and philosophers, and these cynics and satirists, make these lively times of imperial decadence more akin to ourselves than the Thucydides and Aristotle, the Livy, Cæsar, and *Cicero de Officiis*, to which in old days our learning was confined. There is now no need to read in the original crabbed Greek either Plutarch, or Marcus Aurelius, or Epictetus. George Long and other scholars have done all these excellently well. Nor need anyone be troubled with late Latin of the silver age now, for the poetry and the prose from Virgil and Cicero down to Ammianus and Boethius are more easily read with good versions in modern tongues. The folly of the older schools, in their zeal for pure Greek and Ciceronian Latin, closed to us books in which we had everything to enjoy and even much to learn.

And now for the Prince of Biographers—I say the Prince—for no other writer has ever written the lives of fifty great men of action extending in time over some seven centuries, ranging in space from the Euphrates to the Tagus, and drawn from an immense library of Memoirs in various languages and of different ages. Besides these fifty Lives there were fourteen others that are lost, and amongst them at least four of prime importance—Epaminondas, Scipio, Augustus, and Tiberius. There is no compendium of history on such a scale unless it be Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*.

No one now trusts Plutarch as an historical authority for events. We have heard enough of his inaccuracies and his credulity, his confusion of dates and even of persons, and his love of gossip in lieu of critical research. But when all this is admitted, what wonderful pictures of men and of a bygone world, what wise reflections, what sound

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judgment, what a treasury of myth, poetry, anecdote, and maxim. I daresay, as Bury says, Lycurgus was a god, not a man. And Romulus was as mythical as King Brute. But as cinematographic pictures of ancient Greece, these *Lives* are worth libraries of mere annals. Plutarch being a Greek with a limited knowledge of Rome and of Latin, is not so good with Romans. But his *Lives* of Aristeides and Themistocles, of Pericles and Alcibiades, of Demosthenes, and, above all, of Alexander, are delightful reading, full of life and thought and wisdom. I can read them again and again to-day. And it is a mistake to think that our school reading of them can still fill the memory, or can have given us all the ethical and political instruction imbedded in them. Historical judgment often comes back to see the substantial truth of Plutarch's estimates. And now Mahaffy, Bury, Adolf Holm, and recent scholars show us how far better a conception of Alexander and his stupendous career and work we can get from Plutarch than if we follow the democratic dogmatism of George Grote. I hold Plutarch's *Alexander* to be the supreme type of biography proper, as applied to the most superbly endowed human being in the story of mankind. With all his crimes, vices, and brutalities, the human race never begot a son of such superhuman powers of body, mind, and soul; nor does human history record any single man who produced such vast and secular movements over the habitable globe. Julius Cæsar was certainly a better, nobler, and, taking all his powers together, a greater man; and his life was in its far-reaching effects more important to civilisation than even was Alexander's. But Julius had far greater problems to solve and far less favouring conditions; and his mighty achievement of imperial peace and unity was only founded by him; it was developed by his successors from Augustus down to the Antonines.

Plutarch is the greatest of biographers, because he thoroughly grasped and practised the true principle of biographic work—to make a living portrait of a man's inner nature, not to write the annals of his external acts. The conventional biography records what the person *did*: the true biography reveals what the person *was*. It deals with facts as the key of the nature. "I do not write *histories*," says Plutarch introducing his *Alexander*, "but I write *Lives*; and a slight circumstance, a jest, a word is often a truer index to a man's character than accounts of his

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bloody victories and tremendous conquests." If Alexander's was the most electric temperament in recorded history, Plutarch's portrait of him is the most masterly portrait ever painted with the pen of a historian—far more true, more real, and more graven on the memory of ages, than are the laborious studies of all the annalists ancient and modern.

For the same reasons, the modern world has given the crown of biography to Boswell's *Johnson*. Plutarch was essentially a moralist, an umpire of ethics, not a politician, and certainly not a historian. And so was the Doctor. It is always in biography the *ἠθικὴ πίστις* which tells. We need not compare Boswell with Homer, as did Carlyle with his raucous exaggeration, for a "history of England" which leaves out Walpole, Chatham, Burke, and Washington, is rather a one-sided affair. Still, in a small duodecimo way, and making a portrait, not of a founder and statesman, but of a scholar and a talker, Bozzy, by a sort of dog-like instinct of worshipping his master, did achieve, in a literary and miniature form of art, something of what Plutarch did on a grander canvas and a far mightier world. All I have to say is—put aside your *Lives of the Royal Laundrywomen*, your *Gossip about the Stage*, and try if you cannot take up again for a spare hour your Plutarch and your Boswell.

On a smaller scale, no doubt, Southey's *Nelson*, Johnson's *Lives of Poets* (the Six Best, selected by Matthew Arnold), Gibbon's *Autobiography*, Carlyle's *Essays on Goethe, Burns, and Johnson* have that inimitable charm of painting men as revealed to the eye of genius, rather than tabulating the facts of their external actions. On the other hand useful and laborious annals, such as Coxe's *Walpole*, Francis Thackeray's *Chatham*, Lord Stanhope's *Pitt*, Masson's *Milton*, and even Carlyle's *Cromwell*, are just what biographies should not be. It is fair to say that Masson did not profess to write a *Life* of Milton, nor did Carlyle profess to write a *Life* of Cromwell. Both wrote of the contemporaries and the times. Would that Carlyle had written a *Life* of Cromwell! A full and great *Life* of Cromwell is still to seek, in spite of all the studies and sketches of late years. But as to Stanhope's *Pitt*, and Masson's *Milton*, how many persons read them through from cover to cover—much less who takes them up for a second or a third reading? They are repertories—not biographies. Now Pattison's *Milton*, and Morley's *Burke*, are real and enduring *Lives*.

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To me no life of man, from the time of Adam till that of King George, is so fascinating as that of the noblest, best, purest, wisest man in all recorded history—our own sacred hero, Alfred—the only name of a chief in all human annals on whose memory no blot, no defect, moral, intellectual, or even mythical has ever been alleged. The Millenary Commemoration of 1901, when the great monument was raised at Winchester, brought about a new interest in Alfred's life and writings; and a great amount of fresh light was thrown on what was obscure. Dryasdust, of course, raised big clouds and erudite fog which almost veiled again the mighty figure of our greatest man. What on earth does it matter whether he died in A.D. 900 or 901—whether he could not read till his twelfth year, and whether *legit* means "read Latin" or "read" at all? Fortunately we now know enough to make Alfred's personality vivid, complete, and certain.

We have no single adequate biography to which we can entirely trust. For my part, I have always held the contemporary *Life* attributed to Asser to be substantially both genuine and true, in spite of a good deal of confusion and interpolation. I am quite satisfied by the very careful and learned researches of Charles Plummer as to the way in which we should read Asser; and for myself I have nothing to amend in the sketches of Alfred's career which I wrote in 1891, and again in 1901. The well-known *Life* by Pauli is now sixty years old, and was compiled before the researches of our own time; but it is a useful and memorable book, if used with caution and subsequent discoveries.

But the true *Life* of Alfred will always be in his own writings, and especially in his *Boethius*, which can now be read in the original Anglo-Saxon, critically edited by Walter J. Sedgefield (Oxford, 1899), and in his excellent English translation (Oxford, 1900). This beautiful book, now open to the English reader in a dainty form, must ever stand beside the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, as the outpouring of soul by a royal saint. It was the happy idea of Mr. Sedgefield to print in italics those parts of Alfred's *Boethius*, which are not in the Latin text, but are the king's own reflections on life, duty, and religion (and I think these amount to nearly one-tenth in bulk). They are amongst the most noble passages to be found in the last immortal work of antiquity. These enable us to see into the inmost spirit of the best of kings and the bravest of saints. It is

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a book to stand beside the *Imitation* in spiritual elevation, and yet it is the private manual of a hero who in battle would "charge up hill on the foe as if he were a wild boar."

I love contrasts; indeed, I hold that it is well to vary our reading by turning to widely different subjects. Not only on my bookshelves does Aristophanes stand beside my Dante, and Haeckel near to Confucius, but I think one ought to follow up a study of morals and religion by a dose of poetry or satire—*Gulliver*, *Tom Jones*, or *Don Juan*. As to history, I like to turn from Herodotus to Gibbon, from Gardiner to Michelet. And I do not care so much as Plutarch did for *Parallel Lives* (and absurd parallels he made of some). Not only is it pleasant but it is really instructive to *contrast* lives, to compare dissimilar lives, natures, and types. And after a turn at Saint Louis we may take up Cellini, or beside a Turgot we may listen to Rousseau. All of these were men of genius, who represented their age with wonderful life. There was a great deal of human nature in all of them. Let us have no *Index Expurgatorius* in our libraries.

By way of contrast I turn from Asser's *Alfred* to a very different set of studies, just one hundred years later, dealing with a marvellously different civilisation at the other side of Europe—in Africa and in Asia—and narrated in huge tomes of portentous learning and research. I mean the magnificent works of Gustave Schlumberger on Byzantine history of the latter half of the tenth century and the first part of the eleventh century.\*

These four sumptuous volumes, full of facsimiles, illustrations, maps, views and photographs, form an encyclopædia of Byzantine archæology.

How wonderful a gulf stands between the world of Alfred and that of Theophano and her terrible son, "the Slayer of the Bulgarians." And yet men might have known both; and some of Alfred's warriors and some of his Viking foes bred the best guards of Basil's throne. What a contrast as one turns from Asser and his Saxon Chronicle to Schlumberger's pictures of a magnificent Empire in decadence—from the naïf, rude, new-born Kingdom of Wessex to the superfine luxury, wealth, art, literature, and pomp of a vast State which had rioted in its accumulated resources

\* "Un Empereur Byzantin," 10<sup>m</sup>e siècle, Paris, 4to, 1890; "L'Épopée Byzantine," (969-989), Paris, 4to, 1896; "Basile II. Bulgaroctonus," Paris, 4to, 1900; "Les Porphyrogénètes, Zoe et Théodora" (1025-1057), Paris, 4to, 1905.

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for a thousand years. Yet we find, too, Alfred and the Kinglets, around him and opposed to him, trying to pick up the crumbs that fall from the over-laden treasures and factories, and arts, and science, and literature that had taken refuge in the stronghold of Byzantium, as an Ark in the deluge of barbarism. Both Saxons and East Romans professed the same faith, used the same Bible, and followed the same customs. What thrilling adventures, catastrophes, dramas fill the annals of these Basileis and Augustas; what a world of poetry and art had rolled down in one continuous stream for the twenty centuries which separate the heroes of the Iliad from Basil ii. And of all this Alfred and his learned priests knew nothing but a vague report. Let us think of Asser's monkish picture of Alfred composing his books and studying his Latin like a schoolboy in rude primers—and side by side put the picture of Theophano and Zoe and Theodora flaunting their bloody extravagances in a sort of Versailles on the Bosphorus. And yet, as the centuries rolled on, Alfred and his people had painfully to learn a thousand imperishable things from these very Byzantine palaces, churches, and libraries. Nay, in 1911, King George V., in order to be duly crowned, had to repeat the imperial formulas and copy the Church ritual of the Constantines "Born in the Purple."

By all means let us study the Lives of the foremost men and women in the ages past; but not parallel—in the sense of similar—Lives. Rather let us set side by side the dissimilar. And so we may grasp the miraculous complexity of civilisation and the bewildering multiplicity of human capacities. For some years of my life I was occupied with editing a biographical dictionary containing Lives of 558 men of eminence—reaching from Moses to Hegel, and including men even further apart in life and in work than were Moses and Hegel. And I do not know that any task of my life proved to be more enjoyable, or has taught me more.

And then in the very age of the worse decadence and confusion of that Byzantine Empire, of which Schlumberger has given us such lurid pictures, we have perhaps the most noble portrait ever painted of a feudal Chief in the *Memoirs* of Joinville. He was the finest type of chivalry at its highest moment, with certainly the longest experience of any mediæval leader, for he was born in the lifetime of Saint Francis, and he died only two years before Dante, aged 95.

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His *Memoirs* form one of the most important documents of the great thirteenth century of which he is the best representative. His *Life of Saint Louis*, translated by J. Hutton, in a neat and accessible form in the "Bayard Series" is a wonderful portrait of the only mediæval ruler who can be put beside our Alfred—though how far beneath our Alfred in practical wisdom and true manliness—for Alfred lived when the great Feudal-Catholic world was in its rise and Saint Louis, four hundred years later, when it was spent or in decline.

And along with Joinville's *St. Louis*, in the same duodecimo series, may be read the *Life of Bayard*, by the "Loyal Servitor," translated by E. Walford. It is a delightful book, giving a splendid picture of the last gleam of that age of knighthood which all over Europe had ended in an orgy of pride, crime, and blood. But the Chevalier, "without fear and without stain," presents to us a beautiful career of loyalty, courtesy, heroism and piety—the last example of a chivalry which had lasted for good and for evil during four centuries. When I summed up the record of his life as told by his devoted "servitor" (in the week of Charlemagne reserved for Crusaders) my words were—"he was pious, generous, unselfish, modest, temperate, pure, and magnanimous. His courage and prowess in arms were those of a knight of romance; his generosity was princely, and his courtesy unfailing." Read the *Loyal Servitor*, and see if these words are too strong.

For a contrast to the story of Bayard we have the *Memoirs* of Philippe de Comines. How significant is the contrast. They were almost contemporaries, served the same French Monarchy, both fought in the French wars in Italy; and yet they have utterly different standards of life and thought. Bayard is more than thirty years younger than de Comines, but Bayard belongs to the past age and de Comines to the coming age; Bayard all generosity, magnanimity, and loyalty—de Comines full of policy, wariness, and statecraft. And yet de Comines, with his subtle insight into men and nations, is one of the earliest and best of political philosophers, the first great European historian, the forerunner of a long line of modern biographers and diplomatists. Read the story of Bayard at Brescia, or in the camp of Henry VIII., or as he lay dying in presence of Bourbon, and then turn to de Comines' account of Louis XI. at Peronne, or the story of Louis sending a

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servant disguised as a herald to Edward IV.—and we shall see how vast was the difference between the age of Chivalry and the age of Statesmanship. And yet the ages overlap, for Bayard died some forty years after Louis XI.

De Comines preceded Machiavelli in date by a generation, and was the first to put into studied form the maxims of policy which were worked out by the statesmen who founded the modern States of Europe—maxims which Machiavelli in the next century systematised with malign cynicism. But de Comines wrote the French—and truer—"Prince"—an earlier, more human, and wiser manual of statecraft, as his own master in craft was a far greater man than any with whom the Florentine cynic had to deal. We who love our Walter Scott, whose genius never was more brilliant than in his *Quentin Durward*, owe it to ourselves and to France to read the Comines' portrait of Louis XI. Notwithstanding his ignoble defects of nature, his cruelty, craft, and superstition, Louis XI. was one of the greatest men of modern ages, the real creator of France as a nation, and the giver of peace, order, and progress to his own people—whilst his moral nature was little worse than those of contemporary rulers and in some respects was even better. He has been the butt of romancers, poets, and democrats. But the life-long veneration he won from a judge of such penetration as de Comines—a man who shared his inmost counsels and knew his mind to the core—should weigh against the brilliant caricatures of the imaginative painters of the past.

The young people are much mistaken if they think that we elders and serious readers cannot enjoy fun on occasions. There is Benvenuto Cellini's *Autobiography*, which Horace Walpole truly described as "more amusing than any novel." So it is! This wonderful scamp, this inexhaustible genius, not only produced priceless works of art in many different kinds, but left an immortal record of one of the most burning moments in the history of mankind. He was at once the ever-ready artist in every department of art-work, but also an incomparable romancer in literary gifts. He was a sort of double superman—or multiman—who lived a dozen lives, could fight, and brag, and lie, and draw, and carve, and design, and outwit any man of his time. Since he was born in the lifetime of Columbus and died in the lifetime of Shakespeare, he thus lived in the first seventy years of the abounding sixteenth century.

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Benvenuto, in truth, represents the Renaissance in its various forms—its art, its rage for humanism, for a new and free world, its romantic audacity, its vices, its crimes, its wild passions and its exuberant vitality. Anyone who reads his autobiography—or rather the extravaganza he so named—will really know the spirit of these *Diavoli Incarnati* almost as well as if he had read through all the seven volumes of J. Addington Symonds' *Renaissance in Italy*. And by all means read Benvenuto's own *Life* in the translation by Symonds, with French etchings, though it is not a book for a drawing-room table. But even in Roscoe's version, or in any of the cheap reprints, it is a perfect pantomime of audacious extravagance. Popes, kings, courtiers and prelates, jostle rogues, bravoos, courtesans and painters in his pages. And he touches Leonardo himself in one side of his career, and Boccaccio on the other—the literary side.

Cellini's unblushing vainglory and confessions reveal to us that seething and ensanguined flood of Italian romance from which Shakespeare drew no little of his inspiration and even of his plots—a world of reckless enjoyment and thirst for beauty. But the charm of the *Memoirs* lies in this—that we feel it not to be conscious romance or invention of the fancy; for it is told with such precise local colour and such frank realism that we know the writer believed it to be the fact at the time of writing. He had recounted his adventures, escapes, amours, and duels so often and so freely, that he could no longer see clearly what was a true story and what was bombast. There is a touch of Benvenuto about Marlowe himself; and *Faustus* and the *Jew of Malta* in drama recall the fierce and lawless life in which Cellini revelled in actual flesh and blood.

Even Goethe's *Faust* gains colour and an atmosphere if we can bring ourselves to believe in a world in which real men did the actual deeds that Cellini tells us made up his own life and that of his art associates. But, after all, are Cellini's tales more mendacious or more mythical than some other famous autobiographies—Rousseau's for instance, Napoleon's, or even Goethe's? How far is any autobiography literally truthful? Hume's was, and John Stuart Mill's, and so was Gibbon's, and Walter Scott's, but they are all very short and reveal no secrets. Goethe's famous story of his early life is a beautiful and interesting tale, but it always reads to me rather as a romance than as a

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biography; and it may rank with *Werther*—not with a real account of an objective person. A great poet perhaps cannot indite a veracious record of his own distant years. Could Shakespeare himself have told the truth about Anne Hathaway, or the dark lady, and the true history of the Sonnets? And if Byron's *Diary* had not been burnt but published by Murray, could we have trusted it; and, in spite of Lady Byron and Lord Lovelace, should we be believing it to-day?

As to Goethe's own life, the famous *Dichtung und Wahrheit* will not take us very far. Then George Lewes' *Life of Goethe* (one of the very best biographies of our age) will certainly tell us what Goethe was, and how he worked. But perhaps the true portrait of Goethe for English readers will always be the various essays of Carlyle, and he wrote altogether something like five or six essays on Goethe—mainly about the prose, not about the poetry, and more on his wisdom than on his genius. The Carlyle *Essay* on Goethe which we selected for the small volume to which I wrote an *Introduction* was that of 1828, now in Carlyle's Library Edition, Vol. VI., p. 233.

There is no more noble biography in all modern literature than the life of the great political reformer of the eighteenth century by one of its foremost philosophers. The career of Turgot—who was sacrificed in his effort to avert the chaos of the Revolution—was admirably written by Condorcet, who was one of its purest victims. A copy of this memorable book is among my cherished possessions, it is that which John Morley used when preparing his own impressive study of Turgot, and which he presented to me. It is an octavo of some 300 pages, professing to be printed in London in 1786, in the heyday of the Versailles monarchy, whilst the storms were gathering in the sky. It is a battered and stained volume, still in its original boards, and to me is always a pathetic symbol of the ruin of a great patriot and the tragic end of a profound philosopher.

The *Life* of Turgot, by Condorcet, has always been to me the model of political wisdom and the rehabilitation of a great Reformer. It may be read along with the useful biography of Turgot, by W. Walker Stephens (1895), who has translated many documents and letters. The career of Turgot is one of the tragedies of modern civilisation. If his birth and position had been that of a Czar Peter or of a

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Frederick II., the whole history of France and of Europe might have been different :—

—Si Pergama dextra  
Defendi possent, etiam hac defensa fuissent.

Turgot's whole life was a lesson in social justice, in moderate and gradual evolution of the tremendous interests which are always present and compounded in any ancient Society. He was too just, too considerate, too many-sided to be popular—perhaps even to be successful—in such an age as that of Maurepas and Calonne. When they dismissed him, men of sense knew that the end was at hand. Condorcet, with his ardent vision of a better age, kept restrained in the recesses of his scientific mind—"the volcano covered with snow," they said—was the very man to see the wisdom, tolerance, and intense public spirit of his illustrious friend. And the little book which he dedicated to his memory, if it be no brilliant portrait of a unique genius, is a manual of political wisdom and a magnificent tribute to the immortal ideas which underlay the social passion of the men of 1789. And when Condorcet chose as motto of his hero the famous lines of Lucan :—

Secta fult servare modum, finemque tenere,  
Naturamque sequi, patriaeque impendere vitam;  
Non sibi, sed toti genitum se credere mundo—

he was giving the watchword in the battle waged by himself as well as Turgot, nay by all the just souls and the clear brains which have made the eighteenth century an epoch in civilisation.

It is curious that of the man who in the whole nineteenth century was the most promising subject for a great biography, whilst we have a dozen *Lives*, *Sketches*, *Memoirs* and *Studies*, we have not got the real *Life*—and we never shall have. We should no doubt furiously enjoy Byron's *Diary*, if it had not been destroyed; but it could never have served as a real biography. And intensely interesting as is Moore's book, neither is that an adequate biography; for it is the apology of a friend, who had but a very poor understanding of the poet's higher nature. In the attempt to dispel the clouds which veil it, we find ourselves confused by a torrent of petty personalities which are continually refuted and revised and never seem to clear up the story or bring it to an end. I shall say nothing here about Byron as a poet, for to me he is not so much a poet as a personality.

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I agree with those who tell us that it is not easy to find fifty continuous lines of really lofty and finished poetry in all his poems. And yet he is the prime poetic force of the nineteenth century, not so much by his verses, which are usually ragged and sometimes tawdry, but by reason of the inspiration which he gave to his age—by the Titanic power and imagination of the man. To me, it is Byron's prose—not his verse—which is the vehicle of his moral and mental *radium*—that incandescent, scintillating, mysterious centre of activity which for thirty-six years burnt on within a gross and almost ignoble clay. There is not any biography of Byron—there can be none—except in his own *Letters*, *Diaries*, and *Notes*, which to those who can see the man behind them, form a true *Life*. I take up the new and complete edition with its six volumes of prose and seven volumes of *Poetry*, *Letters*, and all the commentaries in the thirteen new volumes, and I say: This is the finest prose in our language; here is the biggest man who blew the Clarion of the Revolution over England.

By good fortune we have an adequate account of the life of a nobler and better man than Byron—the Walter Scott who carried the banner of feudal chivalry in the van of the romantic revival and reaction from Revolution. My Lockhart's *Memoir* is in ten duodecimo volumes of 1848, with twenty illustrations of the Scott family, Abbotsford, and its country-side. Lockhart's book is not a *Life* (he does not so describe it); it is certainly not a work of art, it is too long, and spun out with too many letters and diaries of other persons. And Lockhart in truth is neither a Joinville nor a Boswell. And, worse than all, Scott himself had no great gift as a writer of letters or journals. Byron was immensely his superior in this, and so, as Scott naïvely told Lockhart, he gave up poetry "because Byron *beat* him." And yet, though neither Lockhart nor Scott had any genius in biography—Scott's own early fragment might be written by any one—and though the letters are often goody-goody commonplace, and the diaries cited are not literature at all, still I find Lockhart's *Memoir* the fascinating record of a glorious genius in a great spirit.

It may be that I am myself *fanatico* about Scott—whom Comte rated as one of the twelve great poets since Homer. I am, indeed, *Scottis ipsis Scottior* in the way of adoring Scott; and I take a childish pleasure in the fact that his

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last two romances were issued in my own lifetime. I was brought up on the Waverley novels—and even on the poems—and the Waverleys were almost the only novels that I saw as a boy. And now that I have the Waverley edition of the novels in forty-eight volumes, and the companion edition of the poems in twelve volumes, with engravings by Turner, Landseer, Leslie, &c., &c., in each volume, I never get tired of them. But I am dealing now neither with novels nor poems, but the record of Walter Scott as a man; and in spite of its prolixity, and, too often, its commonplace, I enjoy all that Lockhart has to tell.

Scott himself, I am free to confess, had a strain of commonplace—his silly pride in his border robber ancestors (as the cousin of a Norman Duke told me once, there are no such snobs as the cadets of a titled family)—the absurd craze to found an ancestral domain, and the gim-crack at Abbotsford (I fear it disillusions most of us English when we first see it), Scott preserving the glass from which George IV. drank, etc., etc. Put aside these trivialities, and what a fine nature and unconquerable soul was in that colossal lump of manhood! I know the scenes of the romances well, and the poet's grave at Dryburgh—a worthy rival in its pathos to the graves of Keats or of Wordsworth—and I have read some of the novels in the original M.S., written at the rate of some 2,000 words in a morning—what a prodigious mountain of work! what a world of imagination! what a generous, warm, brave nature!

I can enjoy any one of Lockhart's ten volumes—the raptures of Scott's early courtship, the anecdotes of law and lawyers; the commencement of *Waverley*, and the laying of it aside for years; the meeting with Byron, their correspondence and mutual admiration; the visit to Waterloo, to Paris, to London; the banquet with the Prince, and, above all, the last journey and the death and burial. I know nothing finer than the way in which two men of genius, so utterly opposed as were Byron and Scott, recognised each other, and this culminates when Byron dedicates to Scott his *Cain*, and Scott accepts the honour and applauds the poem. Lockhart's entire book, long as it is and at times *langweilig*, brings Scott to us in life. We may all know Scott now at home. Byron and Shelley may be enigmas, Coleridge and Wordsworth may be self-contained recluses, hermits, prophets; but

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Scott is our dear familiar friend whom we have known and loved from boyhood. And so, Lockhart, whatever his genius, secured the essence of the biographer's art, to give a living portrait of the man as he was, not a mere record of what he did.

# The Wanderers

By W. Edgar Phelps

*It never dies, the race of Gods ! In the twilight of earthly existence, like luminous figures amongst the transitory crowd, they rise and renew the struggles of their eternal passions. They are the only realities ; yet unknown in essence to the vast and vain multitudes of Mankind. In many disguises of incarnations, created by their invincible Wills in seeming contradiction of Eternal Law, they rise, and pass, and rise again. It never dies, the race of Gods !*

UNDER the melancholy greyneß of the clouds, and rudely buffeted by the bitter north winds of February, a poor and pitiful band of itinerant players wandered in the mountains towards the solitudes of the Chinese frontier. There were eleven in all,—males and females, wretched natives of Annam,—singers, dancers, and musicians, shivering pilgrims in quest of a mere lodging. Through this outlaw-infested country, they journeyed without fear of robbers—so very poor were they—along the steep and winding mountain paths, through the dark and silent gorges. And the wind shook their shivering figures, so minute on the enormous expanse of the mountains.

A shaky little cart, dragged by two ill-clad women, held their humble accessories—shabby tinsel, false horse-hair beards, and cardboard head-dress. Climbing lightly, a trio of girls, just budding into womanhood, carried on their supple backs, the means of livelihood of the Tonkinese musicians—a psalter with metal cords, a guitar with long finger-board, and a viola of bamboo with scroll shaped like a serpent's head. To break the monotony of the journey, a rascally juggler, climbing with foolish antics, amused the dancers, three lasses—ugly, perhaps, but pleasant and so dainty!—with fresh cheeks and limpid eyes, and the coaxing, caressing grace common to Annamite girls and kittens. Their teeth chattered, poor things ! when, through the ample pantaloons and smock of thin cotton stuff, and the square of orange-coloured crepe that veiled their young figures, the north wind stung their shivering bodies. Step by step, with painful efforts, they advanced.

Behind the wanderers, their path was lost in the profound gloom of the abyss below them, winding through the sombre woods they had crossed before the dawn, towards those ghostly isles far off in the grey horizon. Between the disc of the seashore below, submerged in gloom, and the massive alps before them, the strong wind had dispersed the mists of the gulf, and the open plain extended, rising towards the western horizon, touched here and there with the violet and yellow of far off bushes. The wanderers, in

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their painful ascent towards the heights in which were tangled the broken shreds of fast flying clouds, took but little notice of all this. At long intervals, on the steep banks that ran down to the margin of a dry ravine, some fruit trees, struggling amongst the invading wild foliage, and the once cultivated remains of maize not yet crowded out by wild oats and thistles, bore witness of abandoned orchards. Sometimes, as they passed a swamp, a snipe sprang out of the tall reeds that raised their pointed heads to the morning sky; on the silent borders of a ruined village, a partridge called plaintively from the stubble; then nothing was heard save the angry wind. The wanderers, strangers from the flat country, and themselves unable to find a home and resting place on earth, gave no thought to the exiles from the abandoned huts. In the disturbing uncertainty of their own resting place, their childish souls did not open to the penetrating melancholy pervading this corner of the world like a mist.

Some distance behind the careless group, a last couple appeared. Vien, the chief of the party, and their poet—and Thi-Teu, the singer, "*beautiful in her cotton garments*"—so says the legend in its magnificent hyperbole—"as the *Liberatrice Tring-Trac*, of old, in *golden robes*, and the *Goddess Kouan-An* herself."

But what evil destiny had thrust her from her rightful place, and far from her familiar spirits? From refuge to refuge, what caprice of Heaven, or crime of man, had exiled her among vagabonds? Ten months had passed since they had met her one spring morning in the season of Ganh-Minh or "Pure Light." In a wayside inn, the maid having requested a private conversation with Vien, their leader had prostrated himself before her when she had spoken. She placed herself entirely in his hands, without fear or doubt in her immortal eyes; those eyes! Not the calm mirror of Indian pupils, but pure vibrant stars in the far distant heavens, under their heavy, dreamy eyelids.

Vien was one of those blessed ones who, by virtue of an ingenuous and profound soul, such as blossoms in the pages of Legend, are always able to discern the immutable reality under the transitory appearance of form and phenomena; he was one of those whom, having meditated on the perpetual miracle which bathes the whole world, nothing astonishes. So, when Thi-Teu spoke, the sage old man, impregnated with Chinese wisdom, recalled those histories, authenticated by his ancestors, of benevolent spirits who deigned to come back to life amongst men to rekindle here below the worship of ideals and the flame of divine love.

Vien had gently drawn the girl towards the group of buffoons who received her without question, as an equal whose vocation it was to amuse and entertain the rich. In their sincere souls, these artists rejoiced, and were proud to possess as a crown of light for the front of their droll assemblage, the maid in whom they realised the absolute beauty, according to the rigorous canons of the æsthetic Annamites. And, good artists all—the women and the men—attracted by their new comrade, they venerated as a devotee his fetish, each trait of that sweet face—the brow, straight and refined, the pure lines of the cheeks—the eyebrows, of which the graceful arches curved themselves towards the temples like the wings of a swallow in flight—the slender, graceful neck—and more than all,

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the smile of dainty teeth, an array of pearls between the lips of warmest red.

These close observers, these plebian Annamites, felt her to be of superior birth. Themselves born in the poorest grade of life, in the course of their talks they surmised that Thi-Teu was the daughter of a powerful mandarin, escaped from the capital to remain faithful to her lover, some obscure student—perhaps a peasant like themselves—she, the maid of sixteen years "*more learned than the students*," sang they—"*pretty as the peach blossom, fresh as the bud shooting from the stem*." The inflexions of her voice doubled the profound meaning of each word she uttered; her gestures dignified the simplest act; her rhythmic step revealed her refinement, her equality with the most noble ladies—without doubt, she was a princess disguised for the caprice of a moment. And so this child with the divine right of being beautiful, was a proof to them of the inexpressible prestige of aristocracy, which is woven by Destiny through the patient generations. Affable, without pride, so her companions found her; indulgent and truly affectionate to the coarse men, as to the light-virtued women; neither the indecencies of the fools, the impertinences of the impudent, nor those occasional debauches—very rare—in which their rapacious lubricity at random gripped them, ever altered her maidenly sweetness. She took compassion on the misery of their lives with the benignant smile of the Buddhas who have passed through and beyond all human life and experience.

Vien, alone, had divined this soul profound and sad, disdainful of gold, as of luxuries, haunted by boundless ambitions, by unrealisable hopes.

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The two companions talked as they made their way, under the grey sky, to the solitudes of the frontier.

"What foreboding grieves you, friend—or what memories?" said the young girl. "You know I resist all temptations, faithfully to follow you. What has Love to offer me? To be a mistress most bewitching, or a wise and helpful spouse? To be that, one or the other, according to my fancy? Ah! No! I shall always prefer the rouge and the powder, the joy of singing, the free life of the buffoons."

At first, her voice rang clear, rising and descending the gamut of tones used by the Annamites in speaking; then, in her last words, she was all soft and caressing sweetness, with that slight nasal accent—the charm of the Tonkinese female voice—and those barely noticeable hesitations that were like the recoil of a timid thought hindered by perpetual reticence.

"No, sister, you do not love our life, ever moving at the least caprice of a mandarin, or village chief. '*Alas! she rises in flight far above the crowd; she moves in a superior air, and the men sometimes admire the audacity of her wings*.' Free life of the buffoons, you say? Free, perhaps, in the manner of a kite that floats in the breeze, and which, at the pleasure of the thread and the wind, rises, descends and soars—and which sings also. It is a poor and wretched life! Those who are charmed by our art, abominate us; they delight in defaming us. If we do not often find hostile faces and

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closed doors, our privilege is due to you only, to the guardian influence that emanates from you. You awaken the desires of the young men, and the sympathies of many of the proud and learned ; but, be they handsome, rich or wise, you hold them all inferior to your dream, whilst you exalt your hope towards the Unknown—towards the Chimera that always deceives, and which to meet is to die."

Vien spoke slowly, disdaining the animated voice so unworthy of the wise, and without the pantomime of arms and eyes so common with Europeans and witness to the Ape, the grandfather, whom these Western Gesticulants imitate eighteen centuries at least after emerging from primitive barbarism.

His was a frail body under the shabby black cloak, fifty years old, but made thin and old by meditative nights—and by opium—rather than by the fatigues of his wandering profession. His white hair fell on to his shoulders from below the sombre crepe which surmounted his large forehead covered with wrinkles. His moustache and thin beard fell to parallel points on his chest.

The singer loved this quaint being whom a squall, but little stronger than the one they now faced, might have lifted from the ground and have blown as a breath as far as the sea, so far away below them. A wise man was this frail dreamer with his gentle eyes without a trace of cunning, who explained to her so much of the magic formula with which to decipher the divine handwriting in all creation. As a child he had been initiated into the art of healing by the use of roots, flowers and fruits. At sixteen years, instructed in the Chinese literature, he was able to prescribe with discernment, and to quote from Y-Hoc and Ban-Trac, on dryness and humidity, on the relation of humour and temper to the blood, and on the zodiacal signs corresponding to the human body. But soon, disdainful of a science so easily acquired, he had gone to the sacred grottoes of Tan-Vien, to the school of a wise and learned recluse and Seer. At the end of ten years' retreat, after ritual mortifications, after studying the Tibetan manuscripts and receiving the esoteric traditions, he understood the influence of the sun and moon ; he was able to read predictions in the lines of the hand and the features of the face ; he was skilful in the use of the bamboo-root, the foot of the cock, and the wands. Inspired by the five dames who preside over the elements, he, a powerful exorcist, determined from the position of the Blue Dragon and the White Tiger, the favourable places for tombs, for which many rich and powerful families came to him ; and he had meditated on the triple symbol of the emblem, Am-Dzuong. As in the poem of Lux-Van-Tien, he was able to say : *"I have analysed the elixir of all Philosophies, I am master of the ten perfumes, the sixty-four fates, the three hundred conjectures. My hand serves me as a calendar ; I have penetrated the essence of Heaven and Earth and the hidden meaning of words."* And he was able also to sing, as the fishermen in the poem : *"By day, I breathe the vibrant air ; by night the moonbeams light my way. Under the stars I am happy and free in my boat of plaited bamboo. 'Tis the water of Heaven that bathes me, 'tis the wind of Heaven that dries me, on the river of Han-Giang."*

Without entirely understanding him, Thi-Teu loved the frail

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diviner, in whom she recognised a soul indulgent always and cordial as her own. In hours of ennui she sought refuge near the "*elder brother*"—the charming name by which the Annamites addressed him.

But he, for his part, was in despair. At the coming of the royal child, on the first day, desires, passions—which rise like a breath, but grow and burn like a wind—and the fury of love for the young girl, fell on him, like a flight of flaming eagles on his long-deserted heart, gripping him there with beaks and claws, lacerating him. Vien cursed the weakness that placed him a votive offering before the precious maid.

He recollected then the science he had so long despised; he employed the most terrible secrets in his efforts to make a reciprocating love blossom in the heart of his beloved one. But he quickly recognised that the divine passion, before which the most humble are in equality with the Emperor of Heaven, was not the prize of magic conjurations, but, winged, triumphant and alone, soared beyond the reach of sorcery.

At last he knew by the horoscope that the Imperial flower would never open for him. Yet, to the adept, learned in the esoteric doctrines of Tibet, this earthly life is but a footbridge necessary to the perpetual ascension of being. Vien attached himself to the thought of living and dying with his beloved in the faith that he would recognise her after death, and that their souls would be united for ever in an exalted existence. And yet he suffered with the thought that after the disappointing wooers, she would one day find, here below, the Unknown, towards which the arms of her hidden ambitions ever stretched, the rival predestined to win her body on earth, and perhaps her soul in the hereafter. Such may be the working of Fate, against which only the ignorant and stupid rebel; to which the wise submit without crying out like children.

Slowly the girl spoke again. "However the women may despise me, the men always seek after me. On the public places where I sing, the proudest, ready to leave all and follow me, by their glances avow themselves my slaves. The youths love me without daring to say so, and in the silence I often hear the beating of their hearts. I know that the fears of the mothers, as well as the jealousy of the wives, drive us from the villages, and that we exist as pariahs by the shame of my beauty. But how stupid these women are! I do not want their men; and then, none of them would follow me long; disenchanted of the trouble which they suppose to be love, scared by my dream, seeking to have me merely grazing with them, they would soon be neighing towards the honest stables where their families eat in peace! To the young men, I sing: '*Do you not know you are too ugly for me? Then look at yourselves in the mirror.*' To the learned, I say: '*A poor husband is the student! He has the long back of a sluggard; he dresses himself with great care, and combs his hair; his nails grow long and curved, and he does not rise from the meal save to go to sleep.*' The powerful mandarin, the delicate poet, expert in charming women's hearts, without choice I leave them all aside. Ah, no! for such seducers I shall never leave our brothers."

Then Vien in his turn spoke: "What you say is true: therefore

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we adore you, Oh Sister, in whom reside all the grace and majesty of the Gods, and worthy to sit at the left hand of Ngoc-Hoang, the Immortal Emperor. But I fear those hopes which even from me you try to hide. You know there is nothing hidden from me, from the vitality of the dull stones that the ignorant believe to be without life, to the soul itself. You dream of a hero"—she started, but Vien continued without taking heed of her emotion—"of a hero, still unnamed, who perhaps you think does not exist. Now, listen; sooner or later you will meet him. But I fear his coming—for your sake more than my own. For you will die at his feet, before his couch, without having moved his indifferent and melancholy heart any more than a bird that flies in the clear air troubles the profound depths of the lake Nam-Li."

She smiled sweetly, a wild flower between her teeth; then with soft voice she sang the old refrain: "*Only the fair are supreme among women; only the hero is great among men.*"

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The wanderers had halted at the side of a covered bridge thrown across a ravine encircled by giant pines in whose high branches the wind never ceased its monotonous minor symphony. Some benches were set under the shelter of its arch. In ancient times, a sage had set up this bridge so that on summer days, in calm siesta he might sleep there in the music of the wind and the rustling leaves, or reflect in his monosyllabic verses, the clear course of the ravine, the frail branches of the guava trees and myrtles, and the mountains of Quang-Si, higher than the clouds, that raised their blue and black peaks like sentinels guarding the frontiers of the world, far away on the horizon. After the solemn words they had exchanged, the melancholy of the deserted path affected both the old man and the maid, the while the wind from below swept away towards the summit, towards the unknown, the music of the whispering pines and the cooing doves.

The rest of the band, careless ragamuffins, sitting on their heels, divided amongst themselves a bowl of rice saved from a previous meal. The young dancers chattered merrily with the juggler—a cunning fellow—a peasant lately driven from the ricefields by the wind of adventure which blows by chance on these country-folk. They unbound their rough hair, to brush and replait it. The musicians had, as though impelled by the same thought, each extracted a pinch of tobacco from his green belt, and soon they were, one after the other, drawing the grateful fumes from the common pipe, and making the water gurgle in the bowl. They talked now, as always, of their divine art. They were a trio of genuine artists, well adapted to their wandering life. Each stranded without a penny, they had met together in the streets of Hanoi. Brothers by instinct, united by fate, they had revealed to each other their secret passion, and had sworn together to live only for their music. But how?—that was the question. They might steal? Would to Heaven they could, but the opportunity of stealing profitably rarely offered itself to these ragamuffins. They had hired themselves out as menials in the houses of Europeans, whom they despised with all their hearts—their music was not fit for the ears of such cattle.

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After a year of sordid economies, their savings increased by a thousand gleanings that attested their tenacious ingenuity, they possessed three hundred piastres. This capital, increased five per cent. in the hands of a Chinese merchant, would make them free. Bah! like good Annamites, they had dissipated their treasure in two weeks at the New Year fetes, with much merry-making, eating, drinking, and gambling. The latter they did with much method, as the old song says: "*After the turban, losing the robe, and after the pantaloons, the belt.*" Then these passionate ones joined the troupe of the honest Vien. They partook of his fortune, good or bad, not needing for pay more than three meals a day, experts in intoxicating themselves with sounds when the wine failed, happier than His Celestial Majesty in all his glory, when they were able, squatted for hours without fatigue, before an attentive audience—or better still without listeners—to execute unpublished variations on themes of Chinese music. They would talk of their divine art; they discussed the theory of male and female sounds, and learnedly elucidated the symbolism of the five melodies which in the universal analogy corresponded to the five colours, the five tastes, the five planets, and which in its persistence resembled the fabulous phoenix.

The old man and Thi-Teu were silent and sat apart. Vien reflected on the legend wherein the dames who preside over the Elements descended from the sky to unite themselves in marriage with the best of men. He remembered Lieu-Hanh, the daughter of Hgoc-Hoang, who was driven from the divine palace for breaking a jade vase. Did she not disappear from earth when the angelic music announced the end of her exile?

Seated at his side, the singer meditated on his prophetic words; but—and her smiles clearly expressed it—of the serious conversation she only wished to retain the thought of the Hero born for her, the elect of the days to come.

The juggler, who had marched ahead of his comrades, came running back with joyous gestures. "A village, a village," he cried. All the party arose, as joyful as he. A village! A resting place, probably food, a mat on which to smoke and sleep, sheltered from the wind and rain! Yes, food and shelter so rarely found on this route to China—and, who knows? perhaps the fortune, also, of which these most miserable adventurers always entertained a lively hope, expecting always to find it at the next turn: eternal enchantment of illusion which dazzled their bohemian souls!

Yes, before them, at the bend of a valley, appeared a rich village. Amidst the fields of canes and potatoes, and through the foliage of banana trees, they distinguished already the houses, covered, not with thatch, but with glittering tiles.

The cold was forgotten; the women resumed their task of pulling the cart. A steep bank had to be descended; then their way lay across a cultivated plain—maize, haricots and potatoes growing plenteously between the sombre hedges—to a border of bushes that encircled the village. Who would they meet there to-day? Annamites or Chinese? A benevolent mandarin or a brutal village chief—or pirates, perhaps? After all, it mattered little to the wanderers, who were experts in obtaining a pittance and shelter, even after insults and injuries. It was always plain that they were

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inoffensive, and far too poor to tempt the cupidity of the most greedy functionary, or the worst bandit.

Arriving at the hedge of cactus and briar, they stopped before one of those bridge gateways which are raised at night and let down at day-break on to two wooden stakes. The gate was closed ; in these parts perpetual watchfulness appeared to be necessary. Between his hands, used as a trumpet, the juggler shouted towards the village, and soon a rude voice was heard questioning the waiting band. "Where are you going? What do you want?" Looking up they perceived behind the hedge an outlook post. Four bamboos stuck in the ground supported a raised wooden floor which was sheltered by a roof of leaves. From this place a man stared at them ; a plebian like themselves, dressed in blouse and pantaloons of that brown colour on which neither dirt, dust, nor sweat had any effect ; one of those men employed by village chiefs as night-guards, and who, to keep themselves awake, strike blows on a rough gong every quarter of an hour. In the villages on this frontier of bad repute they are always on the alert, and the watchfulness does not cease during the day. To the wanderers there was nothing suspicious in these precautions, so unusual in the peaceful Delta. So, without apprehension, Vien replied to the questions :

"We are humble artists on our way to China for the purpose of entertaining honest men with the decent attractions of Comedy, and to live, if possible, by our talents. Will you allow us to enter and rest ourselves, at your pleasure? For payment, we will glorify in beautiful verses, the Spirit of the village, and will extol the virtues of the young men, in the theatre. Search our baggage. You will find no other arms than sabres of wood and cardboard helmets."

The sentry leapt down from his post and lowered the gateway.

"Since that is so, enter, my brothers." He smiled ironically. "You appear to be peaceful men. Besides, the men of May-Xi fear nobody. It is the Village Fête day. Without doubt you will be received as friendly guests, if you please the chief. That's the difficulty to contend with. A fine and learned man, you know."

They hustled in the gateway in their hurry to enter quickly. Already they sniffed the grateful odours of the feast, these poor rats of the country, always hungry and always allured by the smell of cooking. But Vien thought it prudent to have some further information before the door of the rat trap closed on them. Experience had taught him the danger of hasty resolutions and the art of passing close to a windfall without rashly grasping it.

"The chief, you say, brother? Of whom do you speak? Is it the chief of the district, or some passing mandarin?"

Again the man smiled. "Is it possible you are ignorant of these things? Is the great chief, Doc-Liet, so little known then?" With a gesture of careless indifference to the scared retreat of the little band, he concluded: "Oh, he will not eat you, comrades."

The old man lowered his eyes, and stood terrified and motionless as though fascinated by the apparition of a tiger or of a venomous serpent. When, with effort, his lips were opened, they stammered in broken syllables. It was with great difficulty that this wise and resourceful man now found the words to express his doubtful and gloomy thoughts.

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"But—how can we poor ones venture before the noble chief? No! we—we will go away. Who does not tremble at the idea of approaching so great a man? Please—brother—do not speak of us—we will go—we will go," he repeated, trembling: Please—please—"

With many bows, Vien had retreated two steps; and the sad wanderers, with heavy hearts, already saw the mirage of rest and plentiful feasting disappearing, replaced by the reality of the misty horizon of mountains, in whose rough paths, in wind and rain, they would be pursued by their hopeless and sudden hunger. The sentry jeered and stared at them; but, apart from that, he did nothing to oppose the frightened retreat of the miserable band.

Then Thi-Teu touched lightly with her fingers the shoulder of Vien. At that moment the maid seemed transfigured; her sparkling eyes, her cheeks like flowers, her quivering nostrils, all in her expressed an intense exaltation. In her most coaxing voice, she said: "Master, we must stay here. Is not Doc-Liet a great and learned sage, worthy to sit in the highest places at the Court, and in the house of the Son of Heaven? We know he is without mercy for evil-doers, but he will deign to take kindly notice of poor artists. We must go before him—I wish it!" She accented the last words in an Imperial tone.

"But—," commenced the old man.

"I wish it!" she repeated. The rough sentry no longer jeered and smiled; he, like the others, was subdued by this radiant child. He was replaced at his post by one of the men from the guard-room near, and to guide the wanderers, headed by the young girl, he led the way. They all followed him, by the narrow sinuous paths winding like a snake, between the verdant hedges, from which, like plumes, the giant bamboos arose, bending in the strong wintry breeze.

\* \* \* \*

Doc-Liet! Of this astonishing youth, tales and legends circulated in the country of Annam, and even in China. They said that this student, famous for his beauty as for his great knowledge, was by virtue of his triumphs at the triennial competition at the capital, proclaimed "Prince of Doctors," at an age when his fellow students were reading with difficulty, the "Book of Three Thousand Words." It was he who was destined by the Gods to expel the invaders from the Royal Kingdom. At the age of twelve this infant prodigy, whom the Sovereign himself honoured, received from his Supreme Majesty Tu-Duc, the title of "Very learned and steadfast support of the Dynasty." At his death, that monarch—the last true national representative of the Nguyen dynasty, according to the Annamites—predicted future glories for Liet and secretly adopted him as his son. Cloistered in the palace by the jealousy of high mandarins, from his prison he saw Duc-Duc, Hiep-Hoa and Kien-Phnoc pass the throne, derisive shadows of sovereigns who scarcely for an hour wore the yellow robe and carried the silver seal given by the Celestial Emperor to his vassal, the symbolic seal engraved with the figure of a kneeling dromedary. Five years later, after the flight of Ham-Nghi, who, respecting the wishes of Tu-Duc, designated the young man as his

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successor, Liet fought and struggled against the foreigners on behalf of the deposed king. Ham-Nghi, however, was captured by the French and transported far from his native land, and Liet was obliged to seek an asylum in the mountain forests of the frontier. The patriots—from the meanest peasant to the highest mandarins—believed that silently he was preparing his revenge and would return some day—soon—to exterminate these western devils; and that, like the Emperor of Jade when, incarnated in the body of a child, he pursued the Chinese, it would suffice for him to arm himself with a bamboo stick only. This learned youth of eighteen years haunted their souls. His name shone with a glory of hope. Immortal spirits who descended to visit Doc-Liet, had out of respect declined to sit in the place of honour in his house; in the mountains of Quang-Si the white tigers had nourished him with heavenly manna; often they saw blue dragons, each with an enormous pearl in its red jaws, who kept guard at the threshold of his hut. Gentle to the feeble, he protected the children and women, himself as frail as they; modest he was, before the learned and older men—he, wiser than the octogenarians and the wisest; unrelenting to the foreigners, as to native traitors, and, justified by the example of his sacred ancestors, it was he who disembowelled the invaders before hanging their quivering bodies from the branches of trees; and it was he who, like Le-Loi of old, spared the lives of Annamites, content to send them away with their wrists severed so that their traitorous hands should no more strike against their country.

Even in this country of stern and arbitrary justice, where by instinct the poor devils always trembled when they felt themselves at the mercy of the powerful, nothing in these legends had frightened the wandering players. And now, ashamed of having hesitated a little, fortified by the imperial word of the young girl, they followed their guide joyfully and with the traditional carelessness of people of their calling, along the sinuous paths, under the bamboos which bent in the breeze like frail grasses on the mountains. Here and there, between the giant trunks of banyans they saw a tiny shrine, bright with flowers and gilded paper, dedicated to some local spirit. Sometimes, bent under a yoke from which two baskets hung, there passed a villager who would raise his conical straw head-dress and press back into the hedge to make room for them. The old man turned towards Thi-Teu. She still had that inspired look in her ardent eyes, and that attitude of triumph which made her most beautiful.

"Oh! my master, are you still sad?" In a low voice she sang to him: "*The bamboos are shaken by the breeze and your heart by your thoughts.*" Then she smiled, like a sovereign who deigns to console her slave with a word.

"Sad?" replied Vien. He sighed—then, after a pause, "Yes, the stars have foretold misfortune for us. More than ever your vain hopes alarm me."

"Elder brother, I cannot understand your perpetual terror. Speak clearly; and I will try to reassure you."

"Speak?—I know too well the vanity of words. Nevertheless, do not forget, you who disdain men and without pity cast them aside—child, you do not know how profoundly sad are the souls of heroes, more disdainful than yourself, and more pitiless——"

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He did not continue, certain, alas! that he would not be understood, for the maid, who was not listening to him, was murmuring to herself an old song: "*Believe not that you do not know; never in five hundred years will a maid make such a meeting as you do now.*" And for the singer, exalted by visions of glory, the silhouettes of the graceful bamboos suggested young heroes, slim and strong, holding towards her, in sign of homage, the palm of victory.

At a turn of the path they found themselves amidst the uproar of the busy multitude on the market-place at the centre of the village, a rectangle bordered on three sides by mud huts, while on the fourth side a mountain stream rushed noisily over its rocky bed at the foot of a steep bank. In this noisy place, as in the markets of the populous Delta, there were crowds of common people clamorous in their petty bawling quarrels, the ingenuous and jeering rabble of Annam, childishly wicked but never spiteful. Coolies having thrown down their burden, gulped mouthfuls of tea and hurriedly eaten a bowlful of rice, are smoking their water pipes. They hailed each other with loud cries; they laughed loudly, stamping and shaking with merriment, at a stupid pantomime show, old a thousand years ago, but which still amused and astonished them. Very little sufficed to awaken their quick gaiety. As in the rich villages of the flat country, here and there a fat Chinaman, with full round face and placid expression, smoked his little copper pipe while waiting for customers at the step of his door, decorated with long hanging rolls of paper inscribed with prayers and holy records. Cantonese women, adorned with necklaces and bracelets, earrings and ankle-rings, passed, waddling like ducks. They wore large Chinese pantaloons and short blouses with flowing sleeves. In idle groups there stand many robust soldiers, men seldom seen in the market-places of Hung-Yen or Nam-Dinh. They are recognisable as men of war by the hair tied at the neck and falling on their shoulders in a tail, by their twisted belts under their smock frocks, by the gun and shoulder straps, and even more by that resolute attitude, that insolent air which contrasted so strongly with the timorous manner of the villagers. Four of these men, squatted on a mat in the open air, were gambling, and plundering a peasant. With what mistrustful countenance and pressed lips, and what rolling of eyes, the good man watched their play! He is neither lucky, nor sharp enough, poor lad! In spite of vehement appeals to the "Spirit of the market," he has lost. His coins have already spun into the bags of the truculent fellows; and as he has not a single penny left in the greasy folds of his turban, they do not restrain from jeering and laughing in his face. Black-bristled pigs and clucking fowls running at liberty, wallowed and pecked in the mud puddles; little brats in their play, ran head first among the pigs, and scared the chickens. And over all, soaring in the grey sky, are the kites, whose vibrant music is like the humming of bees and Dutch tops.

The wanderers mixed with, and glided through the crowds. On the heels of their guide, at a corner of the market-place, they crossed a rough bridge—a few planks across a ditch. Before a stone enclosure, near which a soldier stood on guard, they stopped. Having struck three times with a stick a wooden drum which hung by the doorway, the guide left the band to get his orders.

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The newcomers, who were subject to the good-natured banter of the coolies and soldiers, had not long to wait. After some minutes their guide returned breathless, to announce that the chief would deign to receive them. With beating hearts they traversed the paved courtyard, passing the sheds where, stretched on bamboo mats, the men in attendance smoked opium or slept by their piled guns. As a sign of respect the wanderers removed their sandals at the third door.

And Liet was seen seated under a canopy at the entrance to his private apartments. These were in a house built on the model of the pagodas and dwelling places of high official personages, with walls whitened with lime, thick wooden pillars, and tiled roofing with a ridge of glazed bricks, representing two fantastic figures facing each other, and supporting a blue china globe.

Liet remained silent, without word or gesture, before the salutations of the visitors. The males of the troupe standing in a line, prostrated and raised themselves four times, executing this formality with the precision of soldiers on parade, and with the rhythm and exact details ordered by custom and taught in the families in the Far East from the earliest times. The females, seated on their crossed legs, in a second line, also four times inclined their foreheads to the earth, their arms held out before them with their hands flat on the pavement. Only Thi-Teu stood erect, still with the wild flower in her teeth. Confident in the fascination of her beauty, she stood resting her elbows on a stone screen, which stood behind her in the centre of the court.

On the face of Liet, no sign of a frown marked his astonishment or anger; and the gaze of the chief sought the eyes of the singer. He was only able to distinguish an ingenuous irony in those pupils, from which, for his curious glance, she wished to show no sign of her thoughts and dreams. They were a firmament without stars. And yet, at that same moment, she knew herself already conquered, the insolent one enslaved body and soul by the sovereign elect. Even as she had fancied in her sleepless nights, he appeared before her—the unique, with immortal youth and imperishable heroic beauty. In his simple dress—a moire robe embroidered with two dragons, face to face, sustained the character Supreme Happiness—he revealed himself to the men and women as the one whom all must venerate as soon as they meet him, the predestined one whom they are obliged to follow and serve. One may not disregard his orders without sinning, for the Gods speak by his adorable mouth, and the Buddhas reflect their wishes in the mirror of his eyes.

But, whilst she sang these thoughts passionately to herself, the maid did not allow her eyes to speak the vows of her enslaved soul; she hid them in the shadow of an assumed indifference. At that instant she would have knelt at his feet to receive the confession of his love, and to affirm herself the slave for ever of the Lord elect; but her imperial will compelled an insolent attitude; with the flower in her lips, and a naive irony in her eyes, Thi-Teu smiled lightly, the while in her heart she sang more and more passionately of her dream, of her love.

One might judge him to be no more than sixteen years, this chief so frail. Thin and very delicate, his face presented a forehead

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smooth as a child's, very white and pure, which the heavy regular folds of his turban framed in sombre silk. Oh! the frankness of those tranquil eyes! the delicacy of those teeth bright as jewels! And the clear complexion of the young man; and the benevolent smile so subtle in compelling the adoration of human hearts—the smile, supreme and mysterious charm of that face, happy and sad at the same time!

Thi-Teu felt him to be affable and proud, this slender youth, born for a throne, and alone worthy to love and to be loved, and of a gentleness which would, perhaps, reveal him as pitiless. In the heart of the maid there passed a shivering foreboding of future sorrows. Thus, so early in her life, so soon in her new-found passion, she realised that for those who love nought is reserved but suffering—more tragic sometimes and more sorrowful than the punishments enumerated for the just terror of evil-doers in the criminal code of Gia-Long.

But, at the same time, at this first meeting she realised also, by divine intuition, the supreme love, only desirable, only worthy, itself the spark, to animate the lifeless statue of her soul; she knew that here below, as in heaven above, the wildest delights that the folly of man conceives could never bring such happiness to the elect, as the worse agonies, the supreme tortures of Love.

Under the persistent gaze of the young man, Thi-Teu had winced. And when with that gaze he had questioned those eyes—wherein the screen of a deceitful irony still veiled the newly-risen sunshine of her passion—she slowly lowered those long eyelashes, and chanted to herself the antique song: "*A young girl—face of ivory and sparkling eyes—leans on the wall of the pavilion, amidst the golden chrysanthemums.*"

In the meantime—for the dream of the maid had floated past, like a ship at sea, in the space of a minute, and time itself, is it not an illusion?—the wanderers, with hands joined, completed the ritual salutations by four inclinations of the head and shoulders less profound; then they crossed their arms, and, standing upright, waited until the master should favour them with a word.

Addressing Vien, he said: "You and your friends are welcome, since the hospitality of an exile you need not fear."

It came from afar, the veiled voice, so slow, so languid! In that voice, so very low and monotonous and without timbre, he betrayed the elegant affectation, common to the learned, which dislikes to accent words and quicken the phrases in the manner of the noisy vulgar, full of exclamations and gestures. Perhaps it distinguished in him the calm confidence of the chief who does not deign to raise his voice to his inferiors, assured of their pious attention. But, to the ears of the wanderers it seemed—this veiled voice so slow and so languid—like the echo of a distant soul, far off in a heaven of dreams, which descends from on high to cross the delicate threshold of those lips; for so, by the oracular mouth of a statue, a God sometimes manifests himself, and speaks to console our distresses.

"You are welcome in my village on these fête days. From his exile the legitimate Emperor has sent the warrant of colonel, delegated to pacify the northern frontiers, to my friend Lanh-Bich. You will take your part in our joy if you agree to contribute to the common pleasures."

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In naming Lanh-Bich, Liet had pointed with his hand to a giant of severe countenance, with low brow, square head, and bull-like neck. The gesture authorised the newcomers to salute the lieutenant in the presence of the master; and all, male and female, recommenced the prescribed salutations before this man. As before, Thi-Teu remained upright, without even inclining her lofty head in sign of a vague homage. The coarse soldier—his large face red with emotion, with anger burning in his bright eyes—did not deign to notice the poor buffoons: very animated, and spluttering his indignation in the ear of his chief, he pointed a menacing finger towards the young girl who remained unmoved and smiling. What he said the buffoons either heard or guessed, whilst, pale with fear, they multiplied their rapid genuflexions.

But Doc-Liet gently laid the tapering fingers of his frail hand on the gesticulating arm of his lieutenant. A learned one whose lips often blossomed with classical quotations and for whom the least action recalled some ancient appropriate words—to the recriminations of Bich he left the sacred Annals to reply, in that phrase, uttered slowly and in a languid voice: “*‘Now, at the entrance of the temple, Ly-Thanh-Thong perceived a young girl who held herself upright like a tiger-lily in flower: indifferent, who did not hasten with the others around the imperial cortege. And the prince loved her; and he made her his wife.’* Does the noble general require that his friend should punish the insolent, or allow him to punish her himself, or will he equal by his clemency the most high emperor?”

These words, tinged with an irony scarcely hidden, sufficed to console the giant. To see the proud chief disarm with a word, this stupid soldier, drunk with the wine of flattery, one might judge him a master in the art of controlling the hearts of men by gentle and subtle words and gestures, and an expert in making his wishes prevail over the most undisciplined characters, the wildest wills melted immediately in passionate servitude!

To the wanderers, Liet then said: “So you will participate in our pleasures: you will be our guests. Remain amongst us as long as you please. You will enliven my friends with your music, and in your pantomime will evoke heroes of former times, like my generous Lanh-Bich. You will be able to say with the poet: *‘You give me fishes; accept in exchange the feeble homage of my gratitude, these precious stones.’* What hospitality I can offer will be able to pay for the treasures of your art and beautiful talents? Now, go in peace.” And Liet, escorted by his officers, at a pace measured and slow, gravely regained his private apartments.

The travellers followed one of the servants who came to conduct them to the town house, the ordinary resting place of passing guests in the country of Annam. On the wooden beds covered with new mats, they deposited their meagre baggage. All happy with the result of their adventure, with many feverish words and exclamations of astonishment, they praised the grace and kindness of the great chief; while shaking their rumpled tinsels in the open air, they responded to the jokes and questions of the villagers—children especially and women—who have already gathered round the buffoons, the eternal attraction which in all climates never wearies the human curiosity. Then, until the repast, there was an hour of

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idle repose. The dancers, and the juggler puffing at his water pipe, chewed the betel offered by the villagers, and jabbered with their hosts. These poor wanderers were already quite at their ease. The devoted musicians, in a corner inside, were already trying their improvised variations on their weather beaten instruments. Thi-Teu, silent and thoughtful, reclined on a mat; near the young girl, Vien sat, sadder than ever, not daring to speak first.

"Ah well, master!" she said at last; "your presentiments have proved untrue. After a week, enriched by some money, we will depart. Do you see in it an adventure very terrible?" Thus she questioned the master, with an affectation of light carelessness. Yet she already felt herself engaged in a sombre adventure, less simple than it seemed to the ingenuous buffoons; the blood coursed wildly through her veins, and her heart was beating wildly. Still superstitious, the maid, with a feigned irony provoked the old man to speak, whilst in an hidden agony of uncertainty, she listened to the oracle that never uttered error or untruth.

Vien stretched himself on a mat, and, with half-closed eyes, replied in his most monotonous voice, as though reciting to himself a verse of Manh-Teu:

"Presentiments are sometimes untrue; but the horoscope never deceives. Why should the heavens take a cruel joy in misleading us when we question them with respect and according to the prescribed rites and rules? An evil fate hovers over us, and an unlucky influence watches us. May it please the Spirit Protectors that we go from here as we came, poor and content."

"What do you still fear?" the maid interrupted irritably: "Do you suppose that Doc-Liet will injure poor miserable wanderers—he, so benevolent and so glorious?"

Her slight anger quickly vanished, and the singer let these words fly away on a smile of happiness: "Like the Prince in the book of Chi-Kinh. *'How imposing his air—in his carriage what dignity! And what splendour of majesty in his step!'*"

"Child! Which of us can know the heart of so high a personage? All the world believes that Doc-Liet is in refuge beyond the frontier, in China. For what purpose does he hide himself here; what new project? You must know that, like the fever, the contact of great men kills and consumes us poor and lowly ones. In a generous moment, Liet receives us as his guests, but, in a week will he allow us to depart with the terrible secret of his presence in this village? Will he allow anyone to live—even us, humble and inoffensive beings—if he thinks them fatal to his grave interests, that an idle, thoughtless gossip might compromise?"

"Oh," cried the singer, passionately: "Does he not know already our adoration, and that each of us before betraying the elect of Heaven would submit to the tortures of slow death?"

"Sister, you speak truly—nevertheless, I fear, still, for other reasons—and you know them —."

Her pure eyebrows frowned in anger, and, with defiance in her eyes, she stared at the old master.

"Sister, my sister, more than all I fear the conflict of your souls. Conquered by this man, forgetful —."

"Be silent, elder brother!"

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Furiously her delicate hand had gripped Vien's wrist. Then the frown vanished, the hand fell, the lips softened and broke into a smile; and the sudden vision of future triumphs having soothed the maid, in the cold night of her eyes, a cruel pride arose, like a new star in the heavens above.

The sage spoke no more; and the thought that nothing could prevail against destiny pacified her beautiful soul.

Since the moment when the radiant vision of Liet appeared before the band, despair had overcome the old magician; it had installed itself as king by divine right on the throne of his heart; and the poor heart had recognised in Liet—youthful, with red lips and face clear and pure as diamond—the all-powerful rival, he, that with his youth and matchless beauty, could seduce and conquer all, that with his science of words and enchantment of ideas, would spread at the feet of his beloved the gems and gold of thought, the jewels innumerable, set anew in ancient legends and sublime contemplation. And more than all this: armed with a personal attraction which indicated to his inferiors the man born to command, Liet ruled by the grace of that persuasive—and yet so disdainful—smile which dissolved the rebellious in passionate adoration. But—and Vien knew it—the royal maid would never bend herself to live as the mere spouse of the long-sought hero; for her complete triumph she needed absolute domination, and that she, the sweet maid, the scorner of men, should conquer and subdue him.

To the humble buffoons her victory would give the certainty of daily food, an existence quiet and fortunate—to Vien alone would it leave the despair that even the pity of the gods would not console. Her defeat—which the omens foretold—would bring death for all—a violent bloody death. For this frail dreamer, who preserved the hope of winning the soul of his beloved in a world beyond, it would be a happy, a blessed death: a birth into a heavenly existence, freed at last of earthly passions, in which he could eternally console her tender soul after the defeat, the massacre, the death. But alas! his adversary had revealed himself even more redoubtable than he had dreamed, a rival more powerful than he. Disdainful of winning her, may he not leave her in the grasp of an eagle that will not loosen its grip on her dear shadow after her death; and if that be so, then through the succession of centuries, the heavy chains of regret would bind the sage to the earth a slave of unsatisfied desire, forgetful of the perfection to be striven for, and powerless to raise himself towards the glorious promise of Nirvana. Across the vain eons which will not be able to give him oblivion, he would turn his tearful eyes towards the beloved soul carried in the clutches of an eagle towards the ethereal blue.

But if such is destiny, what will it serve to revolt? That is why, when the maid, gripping his frail wrist, had said: "Be silent, elder brother," the sage obeyed; and the thought that nothing could prevail against destiny, had pacified her beautiful soul.

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On the same day, at the hour of Ngo, the wanderers rose from a plentiful feast in the town house: a rich repast in which many choice viands passed in succession. After the herb soup and the pomegranate

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seeds with vermicelli, there appeared fish, dry and pickled in spices, fried chickens and roast pigeons, minced pork and eggs in sauce, fillets of beef. The viands were cut thin in little cubes so that they could be swallowed without touching the teeth, as prescribed by the holy precepts. To moisten them, they drank the wine of pears, prunes and oranges.

The hostile wind which with furious barking had pursued and bitten the wanderers, had now become subdued. In this hospitable valley it was like a faithful dog that gently licks the hand and begs for caresses. The silvery sun descends towards the mountain tops, encircled by floating muslin which unwinds itself in light clouds flying in the pale sky.

It was one of those Tonkinese winter afternoons, warm as a May morning in England, with a humid atmosphere softening the hard outlines and the bright colours, enveloping them with the particular grace, the intimate charm of melting lines and soft shades of grey. Away in the savage ridges, the souging wind still pursued the belated mists; but here, fatigued and out of breath, it calmed itself. The breeze barely lifted the heavy leaves of the banana trees like shields of green jade, and rustled the plumes of the arequiers around the town house where the poor wanderers stretched their tired bodies on fresh mats, the while they regaled themselves with cups of hot China tea, the tea of ten thousand springtimes.

An attendant came to announce that the Master wished to have—no excuses, and above all, no delay!—a performance at once in the gardens and without the theatre dresses.

Vien and the singer preceded their comrades by some minutes to submit an improvised programme to the Chief. Led by soldiers, they made their way past the sheds and the courts crossed in the morning; then slowly they gained the private apartments, through two large halls and between the pillars of hard wood, supporting huge crossbeams, which, twisting and turning, were lost in the shadow. Along the walls in the first chamber were alternately basket-work chests and low footstools—heavy, black, and polished like ebony. Here and there were lying huge fans with their white feathers at the end of a long handle; in the centre was a massive table, between two carved benches.

In the second hall, on an ancestral altar, between two bronze lamp stands, the family tablets proclaimed in gold characters the ancient glories of the dead, while from the sticks of incense rose the fumes, the odour of which is dear to the shadowy guardians. Against the wall, and under a fourfold canopy—insignia of power—carved figures of horses supported the palanquin—was a hammock of woven silk heavy with silver ornaments and hangings of leather and blue crepon. On the white-washed walls were hung many panels of hard wood, inlaid with designs in mother-of-pearl. And on all sides was a profusion of embroidered silks and heavy gold and silver work; incense burners of beaten copper, elephants' tusks mounted on bronze plates, and, more precious than all, a rhinoceros horn on a small coral pedestal. All this, without doubt, was a part of the treasures of Huo, given or entrusted to his faithful friend by the fugitive King. From the grated dormer-windows two streams of pale light lengthened themselves through the shade wherein, like

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cats' eyes, the lacquers, the rare metals and the shimmering surface of the pearls glistened. In passing, the sage Vien shivered before a Buddha, all gold, whose face reflected a smile, affable, ironical, and implacable at the same time. For the old man, the indifferent idol evoked a presentiment, and symbolised the Chief with the sweet girl-like face, the youth that won hearts, and then tore them with his delicate fingers and threw the bloody remains away.

But on the Imperial treasures, making them resplendent, a new light glided, which came not from the dormer-windows, when the singer, like the goddess Kouen-An, appeared amidst the wonders.

Those smiling spirits, the ancestors whose wishes and wise words lived in golden characters on the tablets, were enlightened by her presence. All—re-awakened—seemed to say: "Behold the maid whom alone we deem worthy to guard us and to live in the calm aura of glory which pervades us. We behold the attractions of her beauty, the wealth of grace that dwells in her, the depths of the mystery that emanates from her; and also the miracle of the royal child growing more attractive, more profound and richer than our mystery, our glory and our beauty."

Silent servants with bare feet were in attendance, dressed in black robes over pantaloons of snowy white silk, and turbans of violet crepe: a model of neatness, very exceptional in Annam where the servants of the mandarins—and the attendants of the King, also—in their tarnished red uniform blouses and ragged breeches looked like filthy beggars.

Under a verandah which faced the garden, Liet was lying on a large couch, reading a book and smoking opium. Even his pleasures claimed the formality of a solemn ritual. He was robed in a yellow silk tunic, richly embroidered with figures of dragons and griffins, which the Emperor sometimes conferred on his ministers as a supreme honour. Beautiful rugs, lined with silk, covered the wonderfully carved couch which was ornamented at the four corners with inlaid gold and silver. On a priceless lacquered table the smoking apparatus was exposed to the observation of all; the lamp of engraved silver, the box of gilded lacquer, the massive ivory pipe which the fumes had made yellow, an oval tray of precious wood inlaid with pearl butterflies. Within reach of his hand, a bright copper gong with clear bell-like tone, was suspended in an ebony frame. Before the couch, on another table, was a small tea service, a box of betel, and a dark bronze bowl containing cigarettes. Seated on the marble benches near were the officers of Doc-Liet, his guests for the night.

The refined taste of the master was evident also in the architecture of the garden, in the symmetrical arrangement of the dwarf trees whose twisted branches looked curiously like Chinese hieroglyphics. Cactus sprouted in grotesque shapes from niches in the artificial rock work. A bridge, ornamented with blue and white china, curved over the basin of clear water, wherein goldfishes gleamed with lazy movements. Its surface was dotted with the polished leaves and globe flowers of the symbolic water-lily. Between the frail stems of young and graceful bamboos, touched by the gentlest breeze, the myrtles and sweet briars waved; the flowers of the "Passion of Buddha" bowed with their red plumes to the silver blossoms of the

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pomegranates. Familiar birds wandered freely amidst the plants; on the wings of the parrots the sweetest colours—yellow, blue, pink, rose-red—melted in indecisive shades; Sultana fowls bedizened with sombre brownish-red and violet; the silver pheasants, gravely promenading like courtiers, with their black dress under the mantle of snowy feathers; the blackbird with feet and beak of coral pink, and the “Hoang-Mio” with yellow breast and green wings, the legendary bird of the Chinese odes, “the golden bird symbolic of faithful love”—says the Chi Kinh—“which in flying is never far from its mate.” Over the singing and chattering of the birds, the gentle movement of the flowers and the water, the red circle of the sun and the rustling of the foliage, the breeze diffused the light odour which breathes from the white petals of the Tonkinese aloes.

The youth had created this delicious retreat in the image of his dreams; or rather, in obedience to the unconscious gesture of his soul and without his conscious thought, these marvels had crystallised themselves in silence according to his dreams. The luxurious halls, like the miracle of a garden existed for that lofty soul which pervaded their beauty, for one felt that some of the vague attractions of his melancholy floated in the light odour of the white petals.

But when the maid appeared in the framework of the door, the plants bent more quickly in the breeze, as though acknowledging her presence, and the birds sang more and more deliciously. In this retreat, the mirror of the master's soul and thoughts, a most sweet light suddenly enveloped the garden, bathing all things in its magic, crowning their adorable reality with a still more adorable illusion.

This hidden corner of the world—its flowers, birds, carved wood and rare jewels—well expressed, by a silent similarity, the delicacy and refinement of the chief; but it was unseen by the vulgar crowd, and legend had not revealed all the charm of this sublime youth who compelled the adoration of all men and women. She had not asked why Doc-Liet lived alone and without any womankind amidst the treasure that his pure egotism had collected—an anomaly very strange in this country. The sage Vien, alone, had observed correctly this hero, who in reality was unknown even to his most faithful followers, and had measured with clearest judgment the imperial egotism of the young chief.

Doc-Liet, in flying from the capital, had sworn never to serve the Western devils, or their slaves, the so-called kings. Sooner than his compatriots he recognised the uselessness of struggling against the new authority, that Old Annam was dying, and that no Buddha would descend to put new life in the old body. Should he submit himself to the conquerors? Should he parade at the palace and play at being king, under the control of Europeans? He did not even think of it. On the other hand, should he seek the poor hospitality of the Chinese in the hills of Thuyet? He could never lower his pride to so base a necessity. If it was repugnant to him to consort with Europeans, of corpse-like odour, he loved the Chinese still less. So profoundly Annamite was he, that, contrary to the majority of the learned, he always admired the popular and national poetry of his country, and, following the example of the Emperor Ly-Thonh-Thong, he prohibited his followers wearing the large sleeves and

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pigtails of the Chinese—a disguise which sometimes pleased the Tonkinese vanity.

In other times Liet had done great work; he was not one of those rebels who, having "lived yesterday without breeches are able to buy the shoes to-day." He had sung to himself the Elegy of Confucius: "*When people scorn the phœnix and esteem the birds of prey, why does the thought of my old country haunt me still? The wise find all well: they possess the whole earth, without fear.*" Since the hour promised no high adventures, and being wise, Doc-Liet, in the meanwhile, sought for himself, far from the barbarous Europeans, the idle life of a regal potentate over some soldiers and some villages, a life of luxury, power and meditation magnified by opium. Surrounded by a band of faithful followers, patriots convinced of his high mission as deliverer of his country, he hid himself in the unexplored mountains of the frontier; he cloistered himself there, adored by his partisans, who struggled and pirated on his account, and, amply repaid by the irresistible smile of his eyes, maintained his egotistical happiness and magnificent idleness. Royally he scorned those inferiors who, immovable in their ideal of devoting themselves to their country, in reality, sacrificed themselves—exiled, shot by the French, sometimes even beheaded at the caprice of the Master. This they suffered in their devotion to the frail and haughty youth, in whom mere *ennui* created the need of opium, and who cultivated in solitude the rare flowers of his dreams. In the absence of any other indication, this lamp at his side, the pipe that he did not deign to hide, proved his haughty scorn of the exterior world. In this country even the mandarins dissembled their vices with much care, and the most confirmed smokers rarely confessed more than that they possessed a pipe with which to regale their friends occasionally.

As soon as Vien and his companion appeared, Liet, raising himself on his elbow, saluted them with a gracious gesture.

"Are you satisfied with your reception?" he asked. "I have soon sent for you, for other distractions fail us after so many days."

Vien, with many bows and emphatic assurances of gratitude, excused himself for the slight delay. The improvised performance, without costumes, would without doubt appear very insufficient and unworthy of the great chief and his valiant lieutenants. To-morrow they would try to satisfy expectations by presenting on the stage the ancient heroes whose glory was an example and model to the still more glorious living heroes. To-day they would try not to weary the master and his guests with some songs, dances and jugglery, if the chief in his kindness would condescend to tolerate the sight of faces without paint, and to pardon indulgently the mediocre talent of the artists.

"But," interrupted Doc-Liet, "the simple presence of the incomparable Thi-Teu assures me that you will please us." This gallantry which, smiling, he uttered with a very detached air, ended in a light yawn. The old man replied with humility: "We dare to hope for your appreciation," but the maid, irritated by the courteous indifference, by the banal compliment which would have gratified the ambition of other women, turned aside, her lips pressed into a disdainful expression. The prudent Vien then intervened: "Yes,

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master, you do not deceive yourself; and the talent of this young girl surpasses even the beauty of her face. She knows the most beautiful poems in the common language, and recites the verses of Y-Kinh. Like the noble Co-Teu of old, she is even able to reply in parallel metres to the improvised rhymes of the learned."

"I wish then that she shall give me a reply"—and the erudite chief who pleased himself with opportune quotations, added gallantly: "*She is like the graceful arequier slender on its stem. Who would not joyfully be the flexible cord to bind her.*"

Pouting still, the maid looked steadfastly at the elegant youth. To her, he appeared even more beautiful than at their first meeting with his royal mien and his radiant smile. She had resolved to resist still, but from her heart, vanquished by the mysterious beauty of this man, the response immediately rose towards her lips there to blossom into a stanza symmetrical to the verse the chief has improvised:

"*He is like the scent of the orange tree, when on the branches the blossoms are white. Who would not joyfully be the captive bird to breathe it?*" She spoke, and the souls of the rocks, the flowers, the trees of that beautiful garden joined in the voluptuous music of her voice.

In the meanwhile the sun disappeared behind the high rocks, and already they heard the tinkling bells of the deer in the mountains. The breeze which freshened rapidly, carried the languor of passionate desire in the folds of its soft waves. The "golden birds," their breasts puffed out and their plumes raised by the chilly breeze, were responding—intoxicated by the flowers and foliage—in passionate duets of love. And the maid felt herself fainting, all her pride scattered to the wind. But, evoked in time, her will maintained her, rigid and bold, impelled by a supreme appeal of all her soul like the last cry of the drowning. Yet, even before the cool and courteous phrases of the indifferent youth, a bond that nothing could ever sever, had already woven itself, and joined their two beings in a way that needed no spoken word or gesture to be understood. To the sad Vien—under the sky scarcely veiled by diaphanous clouds, in that garden shaded grey and pale blue by the humid air—these two youths in the glory of their youth and beauty, were already fellow creatures of the spirits awaiting the hour of consummation which would make them gods!

The poor buffoons presented themselves in due course. After the ritual salutations, they stood in a line, waiting.

An attendant struck the drawn skin of an enormous tom-tom with a mallet; and one by one the officers arrived, clothed in silk. An ivory plate, engraved and painted in Chinese characters, hanging on the chest of each, proclaimed the grade and status of mandarin. They saluted, joining their hands—heavy paws and thick wrists of soldiers—and took their places round the table. Behind these personages stood their servants carrying water-pipes and the lacquered boxes containing betel and areca, the silver case of pink chalk, handkerchief, watch, and cigarettes. At a respectful distance the crowd of plebeians—rough partisans and villagers—seated on their heels in their ragged jackets of many loud colours formed a circle round the buffoons.

Followed by his two boys, like him, dressed in red clothes, the

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juggler stepped into the open space. The three artists prostrated themselves before the impassive rows of important guests; and the performance commenced. Cleverly, and with ease, they tumbled, jumped and made somersaults, after which the man balanced a ladder perpendicularly on his shoulders, not touching it with his hands, while the nimble and sinewy boys glided between the bars.

Then came the turn of the conjurer, repeating tricks a thousand years old, yet always new. After a few passes over a lump of earth taken from the garden, a miniature peach tree in flower sprang up, to the wonder of six hundred staring eyes. The childish crowd stamped with admiration; unlike their superiors, they were incapable of hiding their impressions under a mask of indifference. They pushed and jostled each other in their efforts to see better, until they were close to the chief's couch. By their exclamations, by the ingenuous freedom of their laughter, one understood the popularity of the master, loved as much as dreaded. So assured was their respect that he had no need to rely on severe etiquette to guard his dignity, and he allowed the noisy gaiety of his inferiors to continue near him.

Then, from a hat, the conjurer extracted white rice and cooing doves; he proposed to produce them from the heads of some clumsy villagers standing near, who retreated amongst their comrades with frightened grimaces. Loud laughter broke from the flock of spectators; the officers were little less amused than the common crowd.

Quite indifferent to all, Doc-Liet continued to read his book. Only at rare intervals he raised his head and turned the innocent glance of those calm eyes toward the spectacle and the spectators—a glance of surprise at the hilarious noise, and which naively sought its cause. The chief did not attempt to conceal his indifference, which repeatedly revealed itself in a light yawn. Then, with a slight gesture, with a half smile of melancholy, he would resume his reading, the while the rude, robust soldiers who observed him felt their souls thrilled by the ineffable charm and attraction of his beauty and manner. In their passionate and unswerving devotion they dreamed of nameless sacrifices, of heroic deaths, with the sole recompense of dying for this frail youth, of serving the unknown designs of some high purpose shrouded in mystery. But of what consequence is their adoration to the learned chief who knows their thoughts? He is unmindful of the living, these phantoms, in the contemplation of the immortal words which through the ages the sages had consigned to the pages of their writings. These human forms moved by an uncultivated brain, these rudimentary existences in which are manifested the universal imbecility, did not exist for Doc-Liet. Sometimes, however, when, in the theatre, the actors evoked the heroes of old, he would deign to look and to listen. Indifferent to the eloquent passions, unmoved by the imperious ferocity or tender love as pictured by the artists, he interested himself only in their luminous and sonorous words.

The conjurer having retired, the dancers took his place in the circle—and Thi-Teu advanced amidst her companions, a royal lily amongst wild grasses. Respectfully, Vien presented to Liet the tambourine which it is customary for the most qualified spectator to

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use to sustain the song, to mark the measure of the dance, to express the satisfaction or discontent of a connoisseur. But the indifferent chief handed the tambourine to the colossal Bich, who was already flushed and excited by the music. The three musicians began a quick and lively melody. The dancers moved round Thi-Teu, their breasts palpitating under the square of orange coloured silk they wore; they were hardly pretty, these poor girls, yet there was a pleasing delicacy in their naive faces which were flushed with a desire to please and which smiled to the accompaniment of jingling necklaces and bracelets. Their dance was of graceful poses, slow gestures, and pirouetting; their slender bodies bent like great flowers; their fingers rose and fell in the conventional movements which symbolised the desire and the refusal. Then, with bodies motionless and erect, they sang together, their right hands swaying their fans in a cadence to the rhyme of the guitars. The music was now veiled and soft, almost a monotone, and in its drawling langour and sudden quickenings revealed the poetry of the Annamite soul.

The three dancers seated themselves on the ground, and Thi-Teu, alone, sang some ancient couplets accompanied by a monotonous melody. At the end of each, and at a quicker time, her companions responded to her by taking up the refrain. Roused and astonished by the delicious beauty of her voice, the chief closed his book and listened. Dancing slowly and still singing the young girl took up a cup of tea from the table, and, after advancing and retreating three times, she offered it to Doc-Liet. Each time the cup was pushed back with a quiet gesture of indifference. According to the custom in Annam, by declining in this manner the master was provoking the singer to use a still more persuasive art, a more exquisite talent in an effort to surpass herself in pleasing the guests; but it seemed to her to be the peevish act of a potentate who is wearied. Hurt in her womanly and artistic pride and red with shame as after an insult, Thi-Teu was retiring in defiance of propriety and in a queenly indifference as to whether she pleased or displeased, when she caught in the eyes of the young man a look charged with passionate desire. Yes, the haughty youth saw nothing but her; in his contemplation he had forgotten his books. She smiled, and standing silent a moment, she played idly with the pearls of her necklace, while with half-closed eyes she watched the hungry eye that coveted her, conscious of exasperating his attention and passion by her deliberate silence.

Suddenly, on a sign from her, the chorus ceased chanting, and alone, scarcely supported by the accompanying melody which was now softer and slower, the maid improvised a hymn to the glory of heroes. The consciousness of triumph glorified her face. In an easy measure, martial and bright as steel, sonorous as the bronze gong of war, she prophesied the struggle and the victory. The stanzas, vibrating and hurried as a swarm of bees, surrounded the promised apotheosis of the young chief with an aureole of gold. Then softly, lovingly, with caressing inflections and modulations turning and flying like the smoke of opium, she spoke of future delights in the mystery of the regained Imperial palace amidst the trophies of victory.

This was so beautiful that the hearts of even the coarsest of

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the soldiers was deliciously thrilled. For one short moment, even the dullest of them caught a glimpse of the dream wherein the souls of poets and kings take shelter from the world. And in a silence which made deeper the gentle rustling of the foliage, Doc-Liet held out his hand to take the cup again offered. Panting with joyous pride, her heavy eyelids modestly lowered, the maid sat down amongst her sisters.

The young chief smiled indulgently; profoundly he had enjoyed the exquisite art, the enchanting voice, and the adorable beauty.

Thi-Teu rose after a little while to improvise a chant in the Annamese language which, unlike Doc-Liet, the mandarins affected to despise in favour of Chinese—one of those chants in which proud women enticed the indifference of young men, with their wily coquetry. With half-closed eyes, and arms outstretched, she began a declamation in classical rhythm, accompanied by the lispings measure of the guitar. *"You are the bright gold, I am the dark bronze; you, the white flower with sweet perfume, I, the lotus of the lake Tay-hô—our merits are equal though so unlike."*

Pointing in turn to the pipe, the lamp and the needle, she continued to declaim. *"To him who smokes, I bring the truth: in the bowl of his pipe I see a small hole; it is there, with the curling and vanishing fumes, that the house, the garden, the comfort and the glory fade away. If he smokes opium, the wisest chief will forget his book and even the use of the pencil. If he smokes, the bravest general will forget the war and even how to use the sword; if he smokes, the most daring of men will forget his gallantry and will know no more how to fascinate the pretty women."*

The spectators dared not applaud, or even smile. After a long interval, and when his heavy brain had caught some of her meaning, Lanh-Bich, alone, threw himself back in his seat in an outburst of hilarity. Doc-Liet warmly praised the chant and the singer; and, still lying on his couch, he in his turn declaimed in the same rhythm. Enamoured of art and poetry, he—like young Nero with his music—deigned to participate even before the multitude in the subtle tournament of song and thought.

*"To whoever disregards the gifts of Heaven, I bring the truth: when a woman marries a smoker it is as if she gave herself to a spirit. As she draws aside the mosquito net, she sees first the lamp clear as a star, and near the lamp a man lies in the majestic attitude of Confucius with a book. He uses the needle as Thieu-Teu of old used his victorious sword; the knife with which he removes the residue resembles the pencil of Tran-Huyen; and the pipe is as inflexible as the desire of a gallant man."*

In the murmur of admiration which broke from the crowd, they heard the maid say in a low voice,

"The humble poetess is not the equal of the prince of learned doctors." Liet eagerly regarded her, his haughty indifference touched for a moment by the perfume of this exquisite flower. His bright eyes expressed so deep an admiration that the singer read love in them also.

In the meanwhile the night descended rapidly; the moon was full and high in the sky; already the lanterns of coloured paper were lighted in the branches; and at intervals the monotonous calls of the sentries echoed in the distance. At this twilight hour the desire

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for caresses—more languid than at the hot noontide, more furious than under the cold stars—haunts the passionate bodies of the young men. Perhaps, too, the heart of the young Master—the heart unmoved by passions, hardened by his position as Chief, by its scorn for the commonplace, by the cult of learning and ideas—opens with the flowers to the gentle kisses of the breeze and fills itself with the dew of love.

To finish the entertainment Vien advanced to read the fortunes of the Chief and his guests. Liet offered his left hand; solemnly, the old man held it, the palm open under his attentive gaze, whilst his fingers followed the intercrossed lines in their complex turnings. Then he predicted an illustrious life, the triumphant return to the Capital at the side of the restored Emperor, and the defeat of the Western devils. Quite indifferent, and with a vaguely wearied expression, Doc-Liet withdrew his hand.

"And now our beautiful friend, Master!" and he pointed to the singer. Maintaining his impassive attitude, Vien obeyed; and the maid—assured that her friend would not lie even to divert the peril of death—advanced, bold and tranquil, to hear her part in the glorious omens. But the old man remained silent; and as he pressed the delicate wrist of the young girl, his fingers trembled.

"Do you see nothing?" murmured the impatient Liet.

With a sigh, Vien let the little hand fall from his. "Nothing," he replied; "sometimes the Spirits confuse the revealing lines to mislead our curiosity."

So—thought Thi-Teu—having read of future triumphs in her hand, this old man, whom no human being could prevent from speaking the truth when he wished it, had remained silent, spitefully, no doubt—impelled by jealous rage—certainly not by fear. The young Chief subtly divined the thoughts of the two friends. This old man dared to impose a denial to the expressed will of the lord of bodies and souls? And this female, in the folly of her pride, aspired to enslave for a day the Master of men? Fools and rebels!

But he hid his anger as, turning to the old man, he said gently: "Your hand, wise Vien, have you ever questioned it? Tell us what Heaven has reserved for you."

"Great Mandarin, for myself, I never consult the Fates. Should I be so happy as now, and so free of apprehensions, if I were well informed of my future destiny?"

"Read your hand, I wish it!" commanded Doc-Liet, with a flash of sudden anger in his eyes. The old man again obeyed him, and the Chief stared at him with cruel eyes. Suddenly Vien turned very pale, but he did not tremble.

"Ah, well, and what do you see, my learned friend?"

"Death!" coldly replied the sage—quite calm now, having strengthened his will by a supreme effort.

Liet smiled lightly, resuming his role of affability. "The Spirits sometimes mislead us, Master! Did you not say so? Now go in peace and enjoy yourselves. Your talents assure us of many pleasant hours. I thank you, Master; and you, divine child, worthy to reign elsewhere than in the theatre! Without fear of the Spirits, we all trust ourselves to Destiny."

Then, for the first time, and following the example of her

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comrades, she bowed before him. In her heart, which had divined the hidden jealousy of the old man, she had raised for ever the imperial task of subduing this lord of men; and the hope which she enshrined within her, like the figure of the Buddha in a secret sanctuary, would never leave her body until death, when it would still live on in her immortal soul. Now at last she understood the mysterious sayings of the initiated that she had heard so often, but as mere words without meaning; and in the light of the dream of this marvellous child, the doctrine at last glistened resplendently out of the tabernacle of hidden mysteries.

Far away, the watchers called to each other under the pale light of the moon in the clear sky; and Thi-Teu looked up in rapture at the silvery orb—the wandering goddess—who, in her solitary ascension and her triumph at the zenith, symbolised the present and future destiny of the singer, wandering too, and to-morrow, perhaps, like her, a goddess.

\* \* \* \*

Eight days of fêtes and feasting, a continuous round by day and night, in the warm sunlight, and in the pale light of the moon—in this unknown village on the remote frontier!—eight days of orgies and merry-making granted by the beloved and affable Chief so wrapt up in his books!

Sometimes he would divert himself by questioning his chance guests, affecting to interest himself in the entertainment of the poor wanderers. He placed at their disposal the contents of many lacquered chests—antique robes of bright or faded colours, beautiful crepons embroidered with huge flowers, silks embossed with jewelled figures of dragons and birds, massive bracelets and necklaces.

Enamoured of rich colours and harmonious lines, Liet enjoyed watching the buffoons as they acted and posed in the precious robes, their faces beautified with paint and powder. Through the fumes of opium smoke they seemed the ephemeral phantoms of phrases and thoughts engraved for all eternity in his books. Lying on his mat, fanned by the rustling foliage of bamboos, and drinking sweet wine, he admired their graceful shadows flying in the moonlight, the while he read again the wise aphorisms of the classics.

But more than all the others he wished to adorn the strange girl. Each night the Chief, whose slightest wish was obeyed as an order of Ngôc-Hoang, Emperor of Heaven, sent for her to come near him. He would send, not a common soldier, but one of his secretaries, expert in the art of courtesy, and of enhancing the daily message with the gold of flattery. And whilst the buffoons entertained the crowd in the market-place, Thi-Teu sang for her hero alone, in the garden bowers, or in the mystery of the private apartments. She sang the daring legends of antiquity; by her art she resurrected the dead empresses and heroines; on her graceful neck shone pearls of yellow amber; on her thin fingers, rings of hammered gold; and around her glorious body clung the heavy folds of satins and silks and priceless furs. Like the Queen in the Chinese odes, she could boast: "*The silk of my garment is green, the lining is gold. The jade of my bracelet glistens on my wrist.*" Leaving to the humble buffoons the comic or tragic masks and the ancient wigs, her pure face shone amidst the luxurious robes and jewels—but carefully

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painted and powdered, according to the wishes of the Chief. For this refined and cultured youth the paint and powder had always an artistic charm—the charm of something more complex and more beautiful than nature. The artificial and complicated disguises, and the fascination of their vanity and brief duration, made a subtle appeal to his imaginative soul. But, under the different costumes, the Chief wished to find again and again only the same woman. Sometimes, by the art of this maid, the warlike Tring-Trac hopelessly prayed to the Spirits of the Ba-Vi mountains—sometimes the widow Cô-Sât implored of Heaven the resurrection of her murdered son—or Thi-Lao, promised to the Prince of Dragons, lamented and wept for the student that she loved; but in each of these characters Liêt saw only the adorable singer, animating the great dead with her breath, dowering them with her beauty, her genius, her passion. And so, to the subtle youth, the ancient and warlike heroines were always the same Thi-Teu, the immortal who reappeared during the flight of ages and revealed herself under many incarnations. And the perfumed paint served only to exalt, to idealise, and to accentuate the beauty of her face, without modifying the features and expression.

She, the amorous maid, spent many cherished hours before Doc-Liet, hiding her passion and confident in the certainty of her triumph. She had formed her plan of battle, very complicated, which could only end in the conquest of his heart, in the kneeling down of the Master, the lord of bodies and souls, before the victorious maid. And yet, on the first night she sobbed on her couch as she recalled the slender and thoughtful youth to whom, in his resplendent and sombre palace, her voice had evoked the great passions of dead heroines. In the darkness and stillness of the night she saw again the silent halls where burned the flame dedicated to the ancestors, and the beautiful garden so calm and flooded with softest moonlight. It was there that she wished to reign, dominating the soul of him who dominated all men, amidst the precious woods inlaid with mother o' pearl, the lacquers, the porcelains—in the fumes of the incense, in the mist of the opium . . . to reign over this sad and heavy luxury, and over the still more melancholy and luxurious soul of the Master. Before falling to sleep she recited to herself the plaintive elegy:—*"The five watches of the night, I pass them in dreaming of my love, in contemplating the stars and the beauty of the skies that give me thoughts of him. Oh! where shall I gather the flowers of forgetfulness? Ah, yes! they grow in the courtyard of my house, but, alas! I do not wish to touch them."*

Often they improvised verses together; alone in the private chamber, or in the garden under the slender bamboos, they would converse in alternate stanzas of parallel metre. And, when the proud Chief chatted with the singer, she no longer found on his lips the veiled tone, so slow, so languid, of their first meeting, that low and monotonous voice—the echo of a far-off thought from the heaven of dreams.

To please him, her voice sounded youthful and clear, and modulated in caressing inflections which made the tinkling music of her words sparkle with gaiety. A soul, coaxing and happy, sang there. At intervals, the voice of the young girl gave to her words

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the light accent of irony—then the grave accent of restrained passion. It was a duet of love and coquetry by the delightful music of one voice. Anyone, watching the solitary couple, would have no doubt but that Doc-Liet madly loved the singer—and, without doubt, she loved him.

The second night the youth roused himself; under the veil of poetry he confessed the sweet desires, the yearning of his youthful heart, so long cloistered in a fixed scorn of women, and which now saw the marvellous flower of her beauty and grace expanding itself for him alone. Then, mistress of her gestures and words, and forbidding them to betray her, Thi-Teu revealed herself in ironical verses, with a coquettish and disdainful air. The man, it seemed to her, was not yet conquered, surrendered, and bound hand and foot, and for life, at the caprice of the sovereign. She determined to excite the love and passion of the young Chief by long resistance. She was young, certainly, and without experience; but had she not learned from the books the mysteries of love and life? Had she not—many times—re-created with her art the strong heroines, the bold lovers of the legend so ingenious in exasperating a proffered passion, so expert in vanquishing the most obstinate by the use of strategy? She could certainly equal them, she, who resurrected them in the theatre stronger, cleverer, and more beautiful than in the time of their ephemeral splendours. So the hopes of the humble girl exalted her.

And then—oh! eternal weakness of the feminine heart—on the morrow—when, with caressing and thrilling voice, he spoke of their beauty, their youth, and the hours lost to happiness, and of their two solitary lives so sadly passing—she abandoned herself in the arms of the sweet youth. Vanquished, the girl was sure that even by her defeat she would triumph when, intoxicated with kisses, he would return to her, as to the opium. But, afterwards, in the transport of love, in the exquisite agony of consummation, in the meeting of lips new to passionate caresses, her trembling body pressed close to the heart of her hero, she thought no more of her resolves and her ambitions.

Six days and nights they lingered there, amidst the luxury shining and sad, amidst the precious woods inlaid with mother o' pearl, the lacquers, the porcelains, in the bewitching vapours of the incense and the pipe. They dreamed only of the present moment; but, sometimes, suddenly shivering, and frightened by a vague presentiment, she closed her eyes and tried to forget the perfumes and the music; perhaps, after so much of the ecstasy and joy of love, life would no more be worth hoping for, even life in that glorious garden, in the arms of her divine hero, when he should become like the others, the master and the man—and nothing more. Yes, at rare moments, the thought came to her—rapid as lightning and cruel as a sword—that such heavenly love can never endure, can never re-commence, that they could not gather the seed of the lotus twice in a year, or realise such happiness twice in a lifetime. Then, pacified, she slept in the atmosphere heavy with opium. And often, when she slumbered, so pale, amidst the green satins, the brocaded damasks, the lacquers and the jewels, her lover raised himself softly, to contemplate more closely, and to kiss with his warm breath, the

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little hands, the cool cheeks, the closed lips which smiled unconsciously. Those were delicious nights in the silent chamber and in the garden bathed in moonlight. These two refined and pure souls deified their love with poetry. He sang: "*Ah! if I was able to hope you my spouse—to bathe your feet, I would make a basin of gold and red tiles. We should live in joy—in springtime, we should drink the breeze; in autumn, listen to the grasshoppers; in winter, I would play to you, ancient airs on my flute of bamboo.*" She sang: "*I love to eat the fresh orange—and to sit in the shade of the orange tree. We should be happy and beautiful—possessing the candour of white rice, the savour of sweet rice, the perfume of the rich rice cake. Together, life would be joy for each—together we would eat the bread and the salt. To the valleys of Heaven, where heroes and sages live amidst the paths of flames, we would spring up, hand in hand—and the shadows, dazzled by thy light, would escort us.*"

Ah! how exquisite was this love of youth, woven of sweet poetry, naive vows, and tender caresses! But when they parted in the grey dawn she would go shivering by the paths all wet with dew, and would sob amongst her comrades—while he, elegant and tranquil as usual, smoked opium in his ivory pipe, on which wise aphorisms were engraved in slender characters.

Did Doc-Liet, the learned and refined youth, love the singer? Certainly not in an ideal sense, not with that love which kindled the hope and the vow that their two beings, body and soul, should be melted into one. But, at least, his passions were enslaved by the beauty and perfume of the young girl; his refined senses were charmed by the rare talents and exquisite art which she had revealed in their solitude; and his soul, simple and complex at the same time, had known the ecstasy of silent communion with a kindred intelligence, with a naive soul, exquisite and illuminated. He, himself, believed that he loved her; and, without doubt, as much as it was possible to his strange nature, he did love her. He knew that this beauty, that had dawned one morning for his enjoyment, was but an illusion and a vanity, compared to the immutable beauty of ideas. With warm lips and a joyous heart, he drank in this beauty, just as he enjoyed all the many ephemeral beauties which blossomed in the inaccessible mystery of the world; and while he ever marvelled at their splendour, he had experienced no inquietude or sadness in seeing them so quickly fade away. Was not their evanescent vanity, even, the very essence and condition of their charm? But now for the first time, when near the young girl, he knew the anguish of the thought that time faded all things and never permitted their glory and beauty to endure. In his heart arose, hour by hour, the anxiety of future days, the horror of those years when the beautiful child would be changed into a wretched old woman, a living and durable contradiction to the memories which wished to keep her young and triumphant. It were better that—truly favourite of the gods, as she was—young and triumphant, she died before the time of her shame and ugliness; and that gathered in a faithful memory, immortalised by the powerful balm of Love, she should persist fresher than in the morning of her youth!

So dreamed the young Chief; and the coarse attendants—uneasy witnesses of their passionate love—spoke amongst themselves in

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lowered tones, of the influence of wicked demons; to their simple imaginations, the singer appeared as a redoubtable magician; they did not realise that in this world, love needed no other philtre than the intoxication of eternal desire. Still less could they understand their dear Master. Invulnerable in his soul, impregnable in his thoughts, surely the handsome Chief—like the hero in the legends—had a heart of iron in his body of bronze.

As a careless observer on the shore observes the swirling waters carry away foliage, boats and corpses, so Liet regarded indifferently the passing phenomena of their lives, the forms, the colours, transitory appearances sometimes charming—a vision the grace of which was able to please the wise youth for an hour by the delicate charm of its vanity.

In this country of Tonkin, subject during fifty years to the most humiliating invasions—the Chinese Mandarins after the pirates, the Europeans after the armies of Hué—some curious personalities had arisen, splendid and strange fruit of the recent grafts set on the old tree of Annamite society. The well educated, despairing of saving the old civilisation, lost interest in the country; supreme egotists, they took refuge in the recesses of their own souls and concentrated themselves on the dream of the past. And since they no longer hoped to expel the hated race of the Europeans, as their ancestors had repulsed the Mongol invasion, at least they would strive to live free in the mountains, guardians of the sacred traditions, and as indifferent to the Europeans as though they had never trodden the sacred soil of their country. They knew nothing of our newborn civilisations; and with their eyes closed to knowledge, they obstinately persisted in recognising in the whole universe only the eighteen realms of the Chinese Annals, vague countries haunts of savage pirates, solitudes uninhabitable by man. They would forget the decadence of national life in exalting the memory of the ancient sages and meditating on their words and thoughts.

Others had learned, like them, to scorn the common crowd, the vile slaves of the present; but had not yet raised themselves to an absolute indifference. There were those who were still accessible to the pleasure of commanding, and to excesses of passions, and for the most trivial caprice they never hesitated to sacrifice the ephemeral beings who adored and worshipped them. So, by the amalgamation of the two opposing elements—the classical Chinese education, and the actual modern world so despised by the wise—there sprang up certain meditative souls, proud and sad—learned ones who regarded the talent of composing verses as the supreme power of their ambition—gentle, thoughtful and courteous, contemplating in a heaven of dreams, an ideal of super-human virtue which, in the propitious centuries they might attain—and all so disdainful of common mankind, so convinced of its intellectual and moral degradation which they themselves often equalled in their transcending tyrannies and cruelties.

Liet was one of these—and, certainly, more completely than any, he despised mankind. But it was not until the maid appeared before him that passionate desire awoke for the first time in his heart. Even in the fumes he found his adored one, idealised by the opium. She haunted him, especially in those moments, when,

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tired of reading and meditating, he allowed his reverie to wander across the dazzling world of memories, in those hours when unrestrained thoughts—daughters of the opium—danced through his brain like the ever-changing figures of a kaleidoscope. They moved then—O, miracle of opium—in harmonious and brilliant tableaux, perfumed and sonorous. But even in the most incoherent dreams, by some strange analogy, the most grotesque forms brought back the tranquil eyes, the painted lips, the perfumed hair of the beautiful girl. Thi-Teu always re-appeared in the successive passages of the dream, bending amid the fluid transparencies of the water, emanating from the singing stream, the stormy sea, or the sleeping lake. Foaming cascades lengthened her robe in an immense train to the feet of mountains, and from some inaccessible peak the pale face of the girl would smile at her lover; by and by, her whole figure would fill the horizon, her breasts palpitating with the rhythm of waves, and Thi-Teu would float on the surface, a peerless goddess of the seas; and then her beauty would reveal itself in visions of landscapes which she endowed with a soul, feminine and sweet, symbolic landscapes in which the perfumes were sentiments, and the colour ideas. When her presence seemed to desert the most vague dream, then he would see her bewitching and brilliant eyes in the blue star which mounted with the moon to the zenith.

Yet, after the delights of the first days, the weary indifference returned to the young Chief's heart, which was thrilled in turn by the pleasures of the senses, and of the mind, but which had ceased to be intoxicated with desire. The cup, which, in his childlike simplicity, he had thought inexhaustible, was already empty. Then he hated the innocent girl for the deceptions so soon revealed. Harshly he reproached the beauty, with its naiveté of ignorance and its ephemeral charm, by which his transcendent wisdom, seduced in an hour, was captivated; the only immortal truth and beauty, were they not the attributes of the harmonious phrases, the profound thoughts and the memory of beautiful forms, no longer evanescent and perishable, but embalmed for ever in the deep knowledge of the learned? Then the bright eyes paled that seemed to watch and smile at him from the blue star near the moon; their vibrant light was dimmed under a sobbing cloud; and in the blasé heart of the Chief awoke a wild desire for cruelties, for splendid massacres which should unite, for a supreme delight, the glories of Love and the fascinations of Death.

Made happy by a princely hospitality, all cares forgotten, the poor buffoons thought little of the approaching departure. At the least they would be able to refresh themselves on their weary journeys by the recollections of this happy week. They would need to buy a second chest in which to carry the many presents of their generous hosts—bars of silver, silks, heavy crepons for turbans, jade bracelets and necklaces of yellow amber. In the meanwhile, each day was a royal orgie in the village of May-Xi; a round of boisterous feasting and merry-making, and at night a general drunkenness; all of which from afar, Doc-Liet, with his book in his hand, regarded indifferently.

The dancers, quick to enjoy their youth so swiftly passing, had

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chosen their lovers by chance ; after the hardships of the mountain paths, the fatigues, the miseries, what joy to find rest in the arms of some brave lad or thoughtful student, and to surrender themselves, their bodies, their lips, their hearts!

The sober Vien, alone, remained, like Doc-Liet, a stranger to the surrounding orgie. Assailed by evil presentiments which his unerring instinct found in the flight of birds, in the rustling of the foliage, in the grains of rice scattered on the mat after a repast, he became sadder day by day. But to the hopeless, of what importance are terrifying omens? Destiny might reserve for him a century of the bitterest suffering here below, and plunged in the darkness of the blackest hell, the demons might, throughout eternity, exhaust their rage upon his poor body and soul; but neither Destiny nor Demons could devise torture equal to that he had suffered during this week as he watched his beloved, but unfaithful friend, drawn to the tempter, as a dove on the wing flutters towards the fascinating jaws of a snake.

\* \* \* \*

The following day the poor wanderers would have to depart; and Vien was anxious for a last meeting with the young girl. Since the night when, mourning over his betrayed hopes, he had seen her glide with furtive haste towards the house of his enemy and cross the threshold of the private apartments, he had avoided her. To-morrow, forsaking her companions in distress, she would, no doubt, remain alone near the young Chief, while the said wanderers set out towards the mountain pathways, towards future fatigues and hunger. At the early twilight hour, Vien approached her in the garden of the town house where they were lodged. In the distance, the calls of the sentry, and the tom-tom of the watchman could be heard. The first stars had resumed their gleaming in the pale sky which towards the west was merged in an ebbing tide of green and gold. A warm breeze floated amidst the fresh foliage, already dark in the failing light. The young girl received the meagre old man with a gesture of impatience and eyes darkened by a frown. From him, as from the others, she hid her secret agonies—from him more than from the others. And yet he was the old and faithful friend who, above all, might perhaps console her at that hour—at that twilight hour when the warm breeze and the odour of the foliage carried for her a deep sadness, an unspeakable gloom of soul, a need of tears—at that hour when with feverish senses, her nerves all trembling, her intelligence in disorder and her will quite dead, she longed to cry out her anguish.

"Sister, pardon my importunate words. For a last time I will try to save you. Yet perhaps I intervene too late."

"Oh! a thousand thanks, elder brother! What have you to say? I am listening."

"He that fascinates you does not love you; never will he love you. For —."

"What do you know of him, old man?" she interrupted haughtily and with defiance in her eyes. Indifferent, and as though he had not heard, Vien continued:

"Never will he love you. For him you will be an amusing slave,

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the plaything of an hour, a month, a year—the time matters little. And not even the slave, or the vile plaything : for the peril of death menaces us—menaces you. I offer you the means of warding it off. These means you will refuse, no doubt. But I must warn you of the danger. We are able to fly to-night ; will you come with us ? ”

She replied with a violent gesture of refusal. Then, shrugging her shoulders :

“What is it you say ? I do not recognise your ordinary wisdom. You announce a peril of death ? Certainly, I thought you were more clever.—Here ! Out of regard for our old friendship, I will be frank with you. The spirits lied, that, in your dreams, foretold for me the part of despised slave. You, who have loved me, do you not feel that they lie ? And do you doubt my power—superior to your magic, old Master ? Yes, I will not deceive you : I love Doc-Liet, but he loves me still more, and it is he who will be the slave, the plaything, if it pleases me.”

She spoke with animation, her eyes sparkling and her cheeks all red. And, indeed, was it not folly to think that this radiant child, this flower of beauty, would find the Chief—a tyrant without pity—disdainful of her love and beauty ? Nevertheless, Vien replied in a voice very low, as though he recited to himself the strange words :

“Yes, thy beauty is resplendent, and thy soul purer than the souls of other women, and than their beauty. Long has the brightness of thy star, on high, effaced the stars of other mortals. Yet, when thou hast approached this cursed one, the light of thy star has paled, whilst the other seemed to devour thy rays and increase itself with their light.”

Then quicker and in a higher voice, he said :

“Let us fly, my friend. Fly quickly ; only so can we secure safety in this world and elsewhere.”

She started, affected at last, troubled by the accent, solemn and passionate by turns, of his words. But, recovering herself, she refused, as before, with all her energy.

“To fly ? Do you even think of it, Master ?—not a single man could leave this village without the consent of the Chief ; even if we succeeded in leaving May-Xi, they would quickly catch us on the mountains.” She stamped her foot. “And then, it is not as you say. Propose to the others, if you like, to run away like children afraid of the rod. I desire triumph—or death, since you speak of death. Yes ! a bloody death rather than flight ! ”

With slow steps she was moving away ; but suddenly she returned, a smile opening on her lips like a rose, and in a mocking tone she added :

“Say, old Master, do you remember the doctor, Tranh-Ganh, who wished to create a spirit to guard his treasures ? In a subterranean cave, he caused a maid to perish, so that her spirit, bound by his magic formula, might watch over his riches. Perhaps Doc-Liet reserves the same fate for me, and I will render thanks to Heaven if it is given to me to die for him and to protect him after my death.”

Lightly, she ran away, and Vien stood alone in the garden darkened by the deepening twilight. He had failed ; he had struggled against forces stronger than himself. He had done his part, his duty.

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To the gods, the rest! The thought of death did not dismay him; for the wise "*to be born, is to go; to die, is to return.*" Of the poor buffoons he thought but little; inferiors, whose impersonal souls must sooner or later mix and blend themselves with the breath of the wind, as their bodies with the earth. If the young girl perished by a caprice of the young Chief, she would, in eternity, be separated from that man by a bloody sword; then, perhaps, she would be given back to him who loved her more than life.

When they opened the coffin of Le Chien-Tong, brought back from China to Annam, they found, twelve years after death, his heart intact, full of red and fresh blood and always beating for his country. In his sublime faith, Vien never doubted that, in the infinite, his heart would beat for ever, as to-day, for his beloved.

\* \* \* \*

That night, before the final grand performance, Doc-Liet again saw the singer in the private gardens. Seated on a bench at the turn of a narrow path, she awaited him. The lilac showered around her, and their perfumed clusters rested on the bare arms and neck of the young girl. She was already dressed for the entertainment and, amidst the flowers and the perfumes, and with that sweet smile on her painted lips, she vied in beauty the goddess Kouan-an.

"Let the night be long! I have many things to tell you!" So she sang as she rose to greet the Master.

Ah! if she had merely spoken of their secret love, sheltered by the trees and flowers; of voluptuous delights that would fill the slowly passing years; of themselves, so young and beautiful in the mystery of these gardens, amidst this luxury so bright and sad! The memory of caresses made divine by the opium might, perhaps, have made tender the melancholy youth. But—foolish, so foolish! the imbecile pride of the singer was pained at the thought of being the slave, of being the plaything of a day, for this man. She dreamed of something more than merely enslaving him, little by little, with the patient sorcery of kisses until one morning he should awake imprisoned for ever in her arms. Foolish! Ah! so foolish! She tried to fire his ambitions; she spoke of the shame of the leisure hours misty with opium; she spoke of the future hard struggle, of the defeat of the Europeans, and of the throne that one day would be his. These words of kindly omen fell gratefully on the ear of the young Chief. The ardent voice of the girl conjured for him a vision of triumph. As at the end of some classical drama, he saw that splendid apotheosis arise when the choir of virgins and warriors throw to the four winds of Heaven a hymn of victory and glory. Tenderly he held the singer in his embrace, under the rustling foliage of trees which bent with fan-like rhythm in the breeze. But, even as the classical apotheosis is effaced when the curtain falls, and, as at the end of a drama, the critical senses take the place of spent emotion, so, when the ardent voice was silent, his splendid vision vanished. From the security of his luxurious retreat Liet caught a mental glimpse of the hardships and fatigues, the long weariness of marches, defeats and countless miseries, all for the profit of an ephemeral emperor, for a vain cause—and in his sublime indolence he gave up the useless agitation so dear to the mediocre. And, during her eloquent words,

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to his sharp eyes was revealed this ambitious soul that dared to hope to make him—the master of men,—a slave to a woman. The proud youth shuddered at the thought. His hand fell, and, releasing his embrace, he said, with the weary gesture of a bored and spoilt child: "My friend, you are as energetic as Sien-Mon, the amazon of Cao-Son, the heroine in steel armour."

With sparkling eyes she replied: "No, master! but kindled by your example I would try to resemble the divine infant who pursued the Chinese, and to be worthy of honour in the temples; faithful, at your side, I might equal, perhaps, the daughter of Mac, who fought till death to protect the king, her father."

"Assuredly, you are worthy," courteously replied the young Chief. Then, kissing her hand, he hastened away.

The night was warm and balmy, a mother of amorous desire—and reminiscent of caresses. The invited crowd already flocked in the gardens before Liet's house. Transparent lanterns, of many shapes and colours, and decorated with figures of dragons and birds, swung slowly in the breeze. Their pale light set off the droll faces of the buffoons and the truculent faces of the soldiers against the background of shadow. But the moon had already invaded the shady place where Thi-Teu sat, moody and alone; over the outlined crest of bamboos and lilacs she poured her lambent light on the rockwork, on the basin of water-lilies, on the dwarf elms. A chorus of night-murmurs softly arose from the distant mountain side; the humming of the night beetle, the croaking of the frogs, and, at intervals, the timid call of the stag and the hoarse roar of the tiger. A musician struck carelessly the metallic chords of his psaltery and its clear vibrations blended with the murmurs of the night.

*"Take up the guitar and sing!"* says the Chinese poet. *"Hasten to enjoy the happy season before the autumn withers the flowers on the mountains."*

When Thi-Teu advanced into the illuminated half-circle where her companions had already taken their places, Liet continued to read, sometimes blowing the fumes of opium in heavy rings, quite oblivious of the silly multitude and indifferent to all such vain and ephemeral appearances.

The singer stamped her foot impatiently. "All is not lost!" she murmured; "I will triumph!"

"You will condemn us all to death," whispered a tranquil voice behind her. Thi-Teu recognised the old man; but shrugging her shoulders she passed by very proudly without deigning to reply.

The moon, at the end of her slow ascension, soared high in the sky, a symbol of marvellous triumph, before descending in her glory. The running goddess triumphed at the zenith over the vain murmurs of the world, over the silent solitudes of the mountains.

\* \* \* \*

In the morning, after this farewell performance, and after rendering thanks to the generous Chief, the poor wanderers would depart towards the Chinese frontier.

The officers were seated on the benches, at the feet of the frail and haughty youth who, still lying on his couch, read and smoked. The soldiers, with the villagers, swarmed in a joyous crowd that

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pressed around the couch of the beloved Master. To see these merry fellows so happy in anticipation of the coming spectacle—still more, to see the beautiful smile of the youth who, while smoking, meditated over the "Book of Ancient Wisdom," one might suppose that the predictions of the wise old man were foolish and devoid of truth.

And yet he had not deceived himself. At that hour his death and that of the poor buffoons, had already been decided. At first the gracious youth had only conceived the idea as a passing fancy suggested by the ingenious opium which, among many visions of ideal beauty, had evoked a tableau of massacres wonderfully composed in a framework of melancholy luxury. Then interesting himself in the idea, he discussed it, as a mere abstraction, with his soul. These strangers, were they not entirely unknown to him? Spies, perhaps! No! certainly not so wicked and dangerous as that, the poor wretches! and yet, astonished at their royal reception, might they not—even without malice—by simple thoughtlessness—reveal to others his presence in the village of May-Xi? Would he not be at the mercy of a mere gossip? That was worth reflecting upon! Who could possibly guess the mystery of this sheltered retreat, the luxury, the books, the cherished solitude that an indiscreet word from these poor wanderers might betray to the European brutes? Certainly Liet by no means hated these men, these childish singers and dancers and the droll reader of fortunes. Still, this learned youth, though void of hatred, was also deficient in pity. Under other circumstances Doc-Liet would have loaded with presents and benevolent thanks, these poor wanderers who moved to laughter the weary of this world, and who under the tinkling of their spangles revived the great figures of bygone days. But why embarrass himself with scruples for the benefit of these beings? After all, when they menaced his profound peace, their existence was not worth a moment's hesitation; they counted for little in the order of the world. Ah! if these poor wretches had possessed the divine soul and the beauty that flowered in their delicious companion—yes, then it would be an unpardonable crime to end such noble lives, to rob the harmonious universe of so rare an element! With a sincere indignation, the gentle youth held himself incapable of such an outrage.—But, still, who knows? In the private apartments, in the unique environment of luxury and melancholy, the imperial girl had already lived the most divine hours of youth and love, and never again could such beautiful hours exist! Would it not be a wonderful charity to spare his frail friend the horrors of old age and faded beauty?—This question, at least, allowed of hesitation; but the poor wanderers must die! And if it was so, then—poor wretches!—their death, unexpected by them no doubt, and sudden in order to avoid useless agony—their death would procure for the Master a new delight, an exquisite pleasure more poignant than love, one of those spectacles—gold, and silk, and blood—which had sometimes thrilled him in the fumes of opium. And the gentle Master smiled at his subtle reasoning; after the delights of these discussions *tête à tête* with his amused soul, he felt himself more indulgent, better, and more worthy to comprehend the eternal pages.

There was no stage for the buffoons; no scenery even. They

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were going to present a piece inspired by the national annals. In this country of learned and willing imagination, an exact reproduction, according to the barbarous taste of Europeans, of the scene—pagodas, fields of battle, palaces—where the ancestors had lived their bold lives, was judged superfluous. And if the value of scenery is only to emphasise, by evident analogies, the sentiments expressed in the acting and the words, what better setting for the national drama, for the valour of generals, for the passionate gestures of amorous queens could be had than this garden in the mountains flooded with moonlight, and this circle of soldiers, the last faithfuls of the exile, pressing round the youth whom Destiny had reserved to liberate the sacred soil?

For a supreme effort, Thi-Teu herself had chosen with care the piece to be played. Doc-Liet—she knew—disdained jugglery, fortune telling and music, and also the pantomime of the dancers; and, if sometimes between two pipes, he listened to the wheedling melodies lisped on the quartette of guitars, it only truly moved him when with the masks and warlike costumes of the performers it conjured a vision of valiant ancestors. Then, by the sovereign grace of illusion, he saw again the resplendent days of past centuries. To his soul, inured to the sorcery of dreams, oblivious of time and space and of perishable phenomena, the evoked dead appeared more real than this noisy bank of spectators. More real and living, certainly. These illiterates would pass and leave no trace, while the ancient heroes—applauded always, admired, and an example to the generations—would live for ever in the gestures of the actor, in the verses of the poet.

The girl had taken the principal rôle to herself; that of a princess, whose love had inspired Lê-May to fight and pursue the invading Chinese. At that hour, sure of her genius and of her charms, once again the hope of triumph saved her.

Doc-Liet ceased to read when she appeared, dressed in garments of woe under a long white veil, and made her appeal to Lê-May, the unique youth "*proclaimed Doctor at the triennial competition at the Capital at an age when his fellow students still played with kites.*" Coloured masks and beards hid the faces of the buffoons; but Thi-Teu left her radiant features uncovered, her pure face shining resplendent in the mournful robes, ennobled by the charm of skilful make-up and revealing a soul even purer, more resplendent and exquisite. The exiled princess looked only at Doc-Liet whilst declaiming her stirring speeches, and emphasised their eloquence by studied gestures of her beautiful arms, by the harmony of word and action. She—the widow of the assassinated Emperor, more ambitious to resume the throne, to liberate her country, than to have vengeance—she would give herself as the reward, would give the Empire and her beauty to the Liberator, after the victory. Vien, under the mask of a young man, and with a voice profound and slow, swore obedience and to engage the invaders in combat. Then suddenly, as though by divine inspiration, the princess revealed to the warrior the secret of the Dynasties, the place where yawned the jaws of the terrestrial Dragon, the cavern where—to safeguard the mandate of Heaven—the Kings had buried the bones of their ancestors; and with an heroic couplet, brilliantly spoken, she sent Lê-May forth to battle.

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The attentive crowd panted with excitement in the shadow; these childish souls, these ingenuous beings were spellbound at the caprice of the poet, by the sound of that voice so expert in playing the many symphonies of passion on the tender nerves of listeners. In pleading to the warrior she seemed to glide towards his troubled heart in serpentine inflexions; in exciting him to the combat, her voice resounded in terrible accents, like the blows of a sword on a steel cuirass; and, turn by turn, it was the tocsin of war and the viola of love, to excite the learned with a warlike ardour, or to reveal to the gross soldiers the dream of most mysterious passion. She endowed with reality the fictions of the drama; soldiers and students, the wise and the simple, all these men assembled around this marvellous artist, participated in body, as in spirit, in the exploits of the heroes of a past epoch. By the simple presence and inspiration of this veritable princess, Lê-May and his companions were without question reincarnated in the bodies of these poor buffoons. Even more than his vulgar inferiors, Doc-Liet enjoyed this resurrection, deliciously effected by this beautiful dream. A delicate flush of pleasure coloured his charming face. In a glance Thi-Teu observed the emotion thus revealed, and radiant with hope she retired amidst the spectators as the juggler entered the scene. He took the part of a cowardly peasant who lamented in abject tones his slain cattle, his devastated rice fields, and his abandoned cottage. One of the dancers—a follower of the princess—gave the reply to this speech; anxious for her lover who was going to war, she opposed her amorous plaint to the distressed couplets of the buffoon in parallel verses—an interminable dialogue.

Then, gorgeous in the pretentious accoutrements of military mandarins, with purple belts and helmets of gold, the musicians and boys recited in strident tones, the exploits of Lê-May; strutting about with countenances terrible and joyful in turns, they brandished their sabres or stroked with their hands their immense beards. Behind them—marching back and fore many times for the pleasure of having their green uniforms and many-coloured flags admired—were the soldiers of the triumphant Lê-May, lent for the occasion by Doc-Liet. These naive fellows entered fully into the spirit of the tableau, shouted, gesticulated fiercely, and assumed the most warlike poses. This was prolonged for hours without fatiguing the interest of the onlookers. Officers and students, soldiers and peasants, all the spectators were delighted with this farcical interlude; they stamped with enthusiasm after the defiant and warlike speeches, and reflected in the mirror of their faces the most subtle shades of the sentiments acted and spoken by the art of the actors.

Liet, indifferent to the din, read and smoked. He neither closed his book nor laid down his pipe until the re-appearance of Thi-Teu.

And every quarter of an hour the distant calls of the watchmen around the village echoed through the vibrant air. . . .

The dawn was already breaking in the east, where those night flowers, the eyes of the stars, were closing. The moon, far, now, from the zenith where that night she had triumphed, was descending towards the horizon—wandering and solitary goddess, about to disappear, a melancholy symbol of destinies, as wandering and solitary as her, which would pass in all their ephemeral glories.

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The freshened breeze bent the frail bamboos under the cupola of pearl-tinted sky. Like scenery stretched on a frame for these tableaux of revived ancestors, the canopy of stars seemed to vanish slowly now that the piece was ending.

The play was finished ; Thi-Teu reappeared with the conqueror Lè-May for the final tableaux, their joint apotheosis. The triumphant Lè-May, emperor by the sword, returns to the capital, and, regardless of rites and ceremonies, the princess runs from her private palace to meet and welcome the valiant. The miraculous sword which he received from Heaven for his mission is transformed into a jade dragon who, mounting towards the stars, blesses the victorious couple. Then they proclaimed their love and spoke in eloquent phrases of the splendours of their regained throne.

Beautiful indeed were the young girl and the sage—he under a mask of a young man and with slim and graceful figure ; she without a veil over her pure face—in the morning light where the rustling of leaves blended with hymns of joy, joining the harmony of the universe to the felicity of men. Vien was silent, while she—her bright eyes turned towards Doc-Liet—passionately foretold of happiness and glory. Like the tongues of fire which inspired the disciples of Buddha, her spirit illuminated her sublime acting which the music of her voice transposed into expressed sentiments.

The buffoons—juggler, musicians, boys and dancers—prostrated themselves four times before the radiant couple, while the soldiers who had taken part raised their bare swords and shouted with all the enthusiasm of a liberated people.

To the mysterious soul of the Master who alone *knew*, to his soul enamoured of symbols, nothing more deliciously melancholy, more exquisitely suggestive was conceivable than these marvels of colour—green and purple silks, gold and jewels glistening on the arms and neck of the women and the bright glint of the bare swords, all under a sky of pale pearl. Beautiful indeed ! the beauty of a melting cloud, endowed with the unique charm of things that soon would fade away. They remained prostrated, these poor wanderers, still trembling, still panting after their exertions, proud of having compelled, at last, the admiration of this adored Chief.

Liet, having yawned—oh ! so courteously, his hand before his mouth—raised his hand with an eloquent nonchalance. And the heroic couple stood before him whilst a silence of terror, gradually destroying the admiring murmurs, spread itself over the crowd of spectators.

Behind the kneeling buffoons, nine of the soldiers drew up, and with a lightning stroke of sabre, each had cut off a head. A beautiful piece of work, a masterpiece by expert artists of the sword ! Over the grass they rolled, the stupid head of the juggler, the cunning heads of the dancers and the boys ; and the blood gushing in foaming cascades, spread in red waves over the green and purple silks, over the embroidered satins and the quivering flesh.

Liet, transfigured, and with blood-shot eyes, eagerly admired the glorious apotheosis. Thrilled by the beauty of his crime—if, however, such a word could ever signify the works by which so lofty a soul manifested itself,—he seemed at that moment possessed of the evil spirits who haunt the gloomy fumes of opium. But, stronger

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than him, the two principals remained unmoved, worthy of Lê-May and the princess whom they represented. The old man, without useless gestures—a true sage—waited submissive to the destiny against which no effort of man could prevail; the young girl, apparently indifferent, assured perhaps that the tyrant would not dare to sacrifice her like the buffoons, plucked with careless fingers, a spray of flowers which she placed between her lips.

Never until that hour had Doc-Liet contemplated a living tableau so wonderfully composed, a grouping so harmonious! The swinging arms of the executioners, suddenly motionless, the splendid robes, the blood spouting from the severed necks, and the victorious couple upright in the dawning light!

And when his beautiful soul had drunk to the full the delight of admiring the couple, so noble and so sweet, surrounded by the red waves ever widening amid the silks, Doc-Liet raised a finger. A soldier laid his heavy hand on the shoulder of the frail Vien. The eyes of the sage expressed a foolish terror, but it was not the agony of the condemned, under the raised sword, or before the tortures of slow death. No! till that moment he had been tranquil, happy to perish with his beloved in a simultaneous death; but now he shivered with fear at the thought of falling alone, at the thought that, spared, she would live united to his adversary here on earth and in eternity. For him that would mean heaven joyless and empty after earth without love.

Doc-Liet, as if in doubt, looked at the old man without speaking. For a minute he experienced a rare pleasure, sharp almost as pain, while, under the motionless body of the sage, he defined the foolish fears and heard the beating of the bewildered heart; a pure psychological delight, after the more physical ecstasies with which he had feasted his eyes!

The very presence of the beautiful girl, and her sorrowful and hapless lover, added a poetic and romantic glory to the scene; it spiritualised the ecstasies of the Chief and transformed a mere passing incident into a permanent symbol. And, perhaps, as spiritual ecstasy disposes the softened will to a divine goodness and pity, Doc-Liet might then have spared the heroic couple; but at that very moment, as Thi-Teu divined his hesitation, he saw a smile break on the beautiful painted lips of the amorous girl; he saw that she still persisted in the hope of triumph.

And the gloomy spirits of the opium, reinforcing his pride, whispered to the sweet youth that, by vulgar pity, he would destroy the harmony of his work; that he would never know the unique marvel, a spectacle at last, worthy to be cherished in the sweet atmosphere of dreams; that one day the beautiful girl, transformed to infamous ugliness, would afford a horrible contradiction to the memory, triumphant and young, which he guarded. Ah! it were better that—truly favourite of the gods, young and triumphant—she died before the time of her shame; and that in a faithful memory she should persist fresher than in the morning of her youth, immortalised by the powerful balms of love!

Another gesture, and the die is cast; the girl, stricken down by a brutal blow, falls on her knees near the old man.

Then on Vien's meagre face shone at last a happy ecstasy.

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Two heads rolled towards the couch of the young Chief, and the blood of the slain trickled over the yellow silk of their imperial garments. . . .

Like a head cut off, the ruddy sun loomed in the eastern sky. Before the silent crowd, whom he saw not, for an instant Liet admired the motionless dead bodies, and the blood that, in clear drops, glistened in the sun like rubies and garnets, or in shining streams, traced jewelled embroidery on the heavy satins. It intoxicated him; he was an artist entranced by his own unique work, by this miraculous picture wherein was harmonised in subtle accord and pleasing contrast the flexible forms, the graceful lines, the splendid colours which sometimes he had seen in the fumes of opium. Over this apotheosis, radiant and sad, of Death and Beauty, soared the triumphant will of the sweet youth, wreathed in glory.

Then, surfeited and weary of it all, he ordered, with a careless gesture, that all should be removed.

Slowly, and in a gentle voice, he recited to himself: "*Golden sky, silvery clouds—the trees bend to the wind on the distant mountain side—I listen to the first glad song of the birds while the moon pales in the west. In my garden, surrounded by bamboos, I will take my books. Oh! the joy of resting in the shade, and meditating the words of the wise!*"

As the sunlight slowly glided towards his couch, amidst the jewels, pearls and ivories, Liet arose. With a yawn, suppressed by a graceful gesture of the hand, the frail and haughty youth entered the house and resumed his reading.

"*Flowers*"—said the book—"beautiful flowers! Full-blown at the dawn, they fade before the night. Even so is human life.

"Be not anxious, therefore, for the things of this world. What is the great mountain of Nam-Sou, under the eternal skies? What even is the whole world?"

Outside the crowd had dispersed in silence. In that beautiful garden, in the warm sunlight there only remained the "Golden Birds" in couples, singing of love and the joy of living—and, in the distance, the sombre landscape of the mountains.

\* \* \* \*

In an ancient book of Nubia it is written:

"Now Salome offered on a plate of gold the head of the forerunner to the philosopher who disdained love.

"But," said he; "It is your head, O Salome, that I want——" Thus playfully he spoke.

And on the following day a slave brought to him the fair head of the amorous one. Now, the sage remembered not his wish of yesterday and he commanded the removal of the bloody thing, and continued his reading of Plato."

# The Grand Jury—In Two Panels and a Frame.

By John Galsworthy

I READ that piece of paper, which summoned me to sit on the Grand Jury at the approaching Sessions, lying in a scoop of the shore close to the great rollers of the sea—that span of eternal freedom, deprived just there of too great liberty with the word “Atlantic.” And I remember thinking, as I read, that in each breaking wave was some particle which had visited every shore in all the world—that in each sparkle of hot sunlight stealing that bright water up into the sky, was the microcosm of all change, and of all unity.

## PANEL I

In answer to that piece of paper, I presented myself in due course and with a certain trepidation. What was it that I was about to do? For I had no experience of these things. And, being too early, I walked a little to and fro, looking at all those my partners in this matter of the purification of Society. Prosecutors, witnesses, officials, policemen, detectives, undetected, Pressmen, barristers, loafers, clerks, cadgers, jurymen. And I remember having something of the feeling that one has when one looks into a sink without holding one's nose. There was such uneasy hurry, so strange a disenchanted look, a sort of spiritual dirt, about all that place, and there were—faces! And I thought: To them my face must seem as their faces seem to me!

Soon I was taken with my accomplices to have my name called, and to be sworn. I do not remember much about that process, too occupied with wondering what these companions of mine were like; but presently we all came to a long room with a long table, where nineteen lists of indictments, and nineteen pieces of blotting paper were set alongside nineteen pens. We did not, I recollect, speak

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much to one another, but sat down, and studied those nineteen lists. We had eighty-seven cases on which to pronounce whether the bill was true or no; and the clerk assured us we should get through them in two days at most. Over the top of these indictments I regarded my eighteen fellows. There was in me a hunger of enquiry, as to what they thought about this business; and a sort of sorrowful affection for them, as if we were all a ship's company bound on some strange and awkward expedition. I wondered, till I thought my wonder must be coming through my eyes, whether they had the same curious sensation that I was feeling, of doing something illegitimate, which I had not been born to do, together with a sense of self-importance, a sort of unholy interest in thus dealing with the lives of my fellow men. And slowly, watching them, I came to the conclusion that I need not wonder. All—with the exception perhaps of two, a painter and a Jew—looked such good citizens. I became gradually sure that they were not troubled with the lap and wash of speculation; undogged by any devastating sense of unity; pure of doubt, and undefiled by an uneasy conscience.

But now they began to bring us in the evidence. They brought it quickly. And at first we looked at it, whatever it was, with a sort of solemn excitement. Were we not arbiters of men's fates, purifiers of Society, more important by far than Judge or Common Jury? For if we did not bring in a true bill there was an end; the accused would be discharged.

We set to work slowly at first, then faster and still faster, bringing in true bills; and after every one, making a mark in our lists so that we might know where we were. We brought in true bills for burglary, and false pretences, larceny, and fraud; we brought them in for manslaughter, rape, and arson. When we had ten or so, two of us would get up and bear them away down to the Court below and lay them before the Judge. "Thank you, gentlemen!" he would say, or words to that effect; and we would go up again, and go on bringing in true bills. I noticed that at the evidence of each fresh bill we looked with a little less excitement, and a little less solemnity, making every time a shorter tick and a shorter note in the margin of our lists. All the bills we had—fifty-seven—we brought in true. And the morning and the afternoon made that day, till we rested and went to our homes.

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Next day we were all back in our places at the appointed hour, and, not greeting each other much, at once began to bring in bills. We brought them in, not quite so fast, as though some lurking megrim, some microbe of dissatisfaction with ourselves was at work within us. It was as if we wanted to throw one out, as if we felt our work too perfect. And presently it came. A case of defrauding one Sophie Liebermann, or Laubermann, or some such foreign name, by giving her one of those five-pound Christmas-card banknotes just then in fashion, and receiving from her, as she alleged, three pounds in change. There was a certain piquancy about the matter, and I well remember noticing how we sat a little forward and turned in our seats when they brought in the prosecutrix to give evidence. Pale, self-possessed, dressed in black, and rather comely, neither brazen nor furtive, speaking but poor English, her broad, matter-of-fact face, with its wide-set grey eyes and thickish nose and lips, made on me, I recollect, an impression of rather stupid honesty. I do not think they had told us in so many words what her calling was, nor do I remember whether she actually disclosed it, but by our demeanour I could tell that we had all realised what was the nature of the service rendered to the accused, in return for which he had given her this worthless note. In her rather guttural but pleasant voice she answered all our questions—not very far from tears, I think, but saved by native stolidity, and perhaps a little by the fear that purifiers of Society might not be the proper audience for emotion. When she had left us we recalled the detective, and still, as it were, touching the delicate matter with the tips of our tongues, so as not, being men of the world, to seem biassed against anything, we definitely elicited from him her profession and these words: "If she's speaking the truth, gentlemen; but, as you know, these women they don't always, specially the foreign ones!" When he too had gone, we looked at each other in unwonted silence. None of us quite liked, it seemed, to be first to speak. Then our foreman said: "There's no doubt, I think, that he gave her the note—mean trick, of course, but we can't have him on that alone—bit too irregular—no consideration in law, I take it."

He smiled a little at our smiles, and then went on: "The question, gentlemen, really seems to be, are we to take her word that she actually gave him change?" Again,

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for quite half a minute, we were silent, and then the fattest one of us said, suddenly: "Very dangerous—goin' on the word of these women."

And at once, as if he had released something in our souls, we all (save two or three) broke out. It wouldn't do! It wasn't safe! Seeing what these women were! It was exactly as if, without word said, we had each been swearing the other to some secret compact to protect Society. As if we had been whispering to each other something like this: "These women—of course, we need them, but for all that we can't possibly recognise them as within the Law; we can't do that without endangering the safety of every one of us. In this matter we are trustees for all men—indeed, even for ourselves, for who knows at what moment we might not ourselves require their services, and it would be exceedingly awkward if their word were considered the equal of our own!" Not one of us, certainly, *said* anything so crude as this; none the less did many of us feel it. Then the foreman, looking slowly round the table, said: "Well, gentlemen, I think we are all agreed to throw out this bill"; and all, except the painter, the Jew, and one other, murmured: "Yes." And, as though, in throwing out this bill we had cast some trouble off our minds, we went on with the greater speed, bringing in true bills. About two o'clock we finished, and trooped down to the Court to be released. On the stairway the Jew came close, and, having examined me a little sharply with his velvety slits of eyes, as if to see that he was not making a mistake, said: "Ith fonny—we bring in eighty-thix bills true, and one we throw out, and the one we throw out we know it to be true, and the dirtieth job of the whole lot. Ith fonny!" But as he finished speaking we reached the Court, where, in his red robe, and grey wig, with his clear-cut, handsome face, the judge seemed to shine and radiate, like sun through gloom. "I thank you, gentlemen," he said, in a voice courteous and a little mocking, as though he had somewhere seen us before: "I thank you for the way in which you have performed your duties. I have not the pleasure of assigning to you anything for your services except the privilege of going over a prison, where you will be able to see what sort of existence awaits many of those to whose cases you have devoted so much of your valuable time. You are released, gentlemen."

Looking at each other a little hurriedly, and not taking

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too much farewell, for fear of having to meet again, we separated.

I was, then, free—free of the injunction of that piece of paper reposing in my pocket. Yet its influence was still upon me. I did not hurry away, but lingered in the Courts, fascinated by the notion that the fate of each prisoner had first passed through my hands. At last I made an effort, and went out. In the corridor I passed a woman whose figure seemed familiar. She was sitting with her hands in her lap looking straight before her, pale-faced and not uncomely, with thickish mouth and nose—the woman whose bill we had thrown out. Why was she sitting there? Had she not then realised that we had quashed her claim; or was she, like myself, kept here by mere attraction of the Law? Following I know not what impulse, I said: “Your case was dismissed, wasn’t it?” She looked up at me stolidly, and a tear, which had evidently been long gathering, dropped at the movement. “I do nod know; I waid to see,” she said in her thick voice; “I tink there has been mistake.” My face, no doubt, betrayed something of my sentiments about her case, for the thick tears began rolling fast down her pasty cheeks, and her pent-up feeling suddenly flowed forth in words: “I work ’ard; Gott! how I work hard! And there gomes dis liddle beastly man, and rob me. And they say: ‘Ah! yes; but you are a bad woman, we don’ trust you—you speak lie.’ But I speak druth, I am nod a bad woman—I gome from Hamburg.” “Yes, yes,” I murmured; “yes, yes.” “I do not know this country well, sir. I speak bad English. Is that why they do not drust my word?” She was silent for a moment, searching my face, then broke out again: “It is all ’ard work in my profession, I make very liddle, I cannot afford to be rob. Without the men I cannod make my living, I *must* drust them—and they rob me like this, it is too ’ard.” And the slow tears rolled faster and faster from her eyes on to her hands and her black lap. Then quietly, and looking for a moment singularly like a big, unhappy child, she asked: “Will you blease dell me, sir, why they will not give me the law of that dirty little man?”

I knew—and too well; but I could not tell her.

“You see,” I said, “it’s just a case of your word against his.”

“Oh! no; but,” she said eagerly, “he give me the note—I would not have taken it if I ’ad not thought it good,

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would I? That is sure, isn't it? But five pounds it is not my price. It must that I give 'im change! Those gentlemen that heard my case, they are men of business, they must know that it is not my price. If I could tell the judge—I think he is man of business too—he would know that too, for sure. I am not so young. I am not so verree beautiful as all that; he must see, mustn't he, sir?"

At my wits' end how to answer that most strange question, I stammered out: "But, you know, your profession is outside the law."

At that, a slow anger dyed her face. She looked down; then, suddenly lifting one of her dirty, ungloved hands, she laid it on her breast with the gesture of one baring to me the truth in her heart. "I am not a bad woman," she said: "Dat beastly little man, he do the same as me—I am free-woman, I am not a slave bound to do the same to-morrow night, no more than he. Such like him make me what I am; he have all the pleasure, I have all the work. He give me noding—he rob my poor money, and he make me seem to strangers a bad woman. Oh, dear! I am not happy!"

The impulse I had been having to press on her the money, died within me; I felt suddenly it would be another insult. From the movement of her fingers about her heart I could not but see that this grief of hers was not about the money. It was the inarticulate outburst of a bitter sense of deep injustice; of all the dumb wondering at her own fate that went about with her behind that broad stolid face and bosom. This loss of the money was but a symbol of the furtive, hopeless insecurity she lived with day and night, now forced into the light, for herself and all the world to see. She felt it suddenly a bitter, unfair thing. This beastly little man did not share her insecurity. None of us shared it—none of us, who had brought her down to this. And, quite unable to explain to her how natural and proper it all was, I only murmured: "I am sorry, awfully sorry," and fled away.

### PANEL II.

It was just a week later when, having for passport my Grand Jury summons, I presented myself at that prison where we had the privilege of seeing the existence to which we had assisted so many of the eighty-six.

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"I'm afraid," I said to the guardian of the gate, "that I am rather late in availing myself—the others, no doubt—?"

"Not at all, sir," he said, smiling. "You're the first, and, if you'll excuse me, I think you'll be the last. Will you wait in here while I send for the chief warder to take you over?"

He showed me then to what he called the Warder's Library—an iron-barred room, more bare and brown than any I had seen since I left school. While I stood there waiting and staring out into the prison courtyard, there came, rolling and rumbling in, a Black Maria. It drew up with a clatter, and I saw through the barred door the single prisoner—a young girl of perhaps eighteen—dressed in rusty black. She was resting her forehead against a bar and looking out, her quick, narrow dark eyes taking in her new surroundings with a sort of sharp, restless indifference; and her pale, thin-lipped, oval face quite expressionless. Behind those bars she seemed to me for all the world like a little animal of the cat tribe being brought in to her Zoo. Me she did not see, but if she had I felt she would not shrink, but just give me the same sharp, indifferent look she was giving all else. The policeman on the step behind had disappeared at once, and the driver now got down from his perch and, coming round, began to gossip with her. I saw her slink her eyes and smile at him, and he smiled back; a large man, not unkindly. Then he returned to his horses, and she stayed as before, with her forehead against the bars, just staring out. Watching her like that, unseen, I seemed to be able to see right through that tight-lipped, lynx-eyed mask. I seemed to know that little creature through and through, as one knows anything that one surprises off its guard, sunk in its most private moods. I seemed to see her little restless, furtive, utterly unmoral soul, so stripped of all defence, as if she had taken it from her heart and handed it out to me. I saw that she was one of those whose hands slip as indifferently into others' pockets as into their own; incapable of fidelity, and incapable of trusting; quick as cats, and as devoid of application; ready to scratch, ready to purr, ready to scratch again; quick to change, and secretly as unchangeable as a little pebble. And I thought: "Here we are, taking her to the Zoo (by no means for the first time, if demeanour be any guide), and we shall put her in a cage, and make her sew, and give her good books which she will not read; and she will sew, and

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walk up and down, until we let her out; then she will return to her old haunts, and at once go prowling and do exactly the same again, whatever it was, until we catch her and lock her up once more. And in this way we shall go on purifying Society until she dies. And I thought: If indeed she had been created cat in body as well as in soul, we should not have treated her thus, but should have said: 'Go on, little cat, you scratch us sometimes, you steal often, you are as sensual as the night. All this we cannot help. So were you made—we know you cannot change—you amuse us! Go on, little cat!' Would it not then be better, and less savoury of humbug if we said the same to her whose cat-soul has chanced into this human shape? For assuredly she will but pilfer, and scratch a little, and be mildly vicious, in her little life, and do no desperate harm, having but poor capacity for evil behind that petty, thin-lipped oval mask. What is the good of all this padlock business for such as she; are we not making mountains out of her molehills? Where is our sense of proportion, and our sense of humour? Why try to alter the make and shape of Nature with our petty chisels? Let be, and come to work that we *can* make something of!" And suddenly I remembered that I was a Grand Juryman, a purifier of Society, who had brought her bill in true; and, that I might not be tempted to think these thoughts of a bad citizen, I turned my eyes away from her and took up my list of indictments. Yes, there she was, at least so I decided: Number 42, "Pilson, Jenny: Larcency, pocket-picking." And I turned my memory back to the evidence about her case, but I could not remember a single word. In the margin I had noted: "Incorrigible from a child up; bad surroundings." And a mad impulse came over me to go back to my window and call through the bars to her: "Jenny Pilson! Jenny Pilson! It was I who bred you and surrounded you with evil! It was I who caught you, for being what I made you! I brought your bill in true! I judged you, and I caged you! Jenny Pilson! Jenny Pilson!" But just as I reached the window, the door was fortunately opened, and a voice said: "Now, Sir; at your service!" . . .

I sat again in that scoop of the shore by the long rolling

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seas, burying in the sand the piece of paper which had summoned me away to my Grand Jury; and the same thoughts came to me with the breaking of the waves that came to me before: How, in every wave was a particle that had known the shore of every land; and in each sparkle of the hot sunlight stealing-up that bright water into the sky, the microcosm of all change and of all unity.

# The Theatre of the Future

By Viacheslaf Ivanof

*Translated from the Russian by Stephen Graham*

Do we see in contemporary symbolism a return to the romantic schism between the dream of life and life itself? Or is there heard in it the prophetic intelligence of new life, its dream only anticipating reality? The question thus stated may awaken distrust. First of all, what does the term symbolism connote? We hasten to explain that we are not speaking of Art alone, but of something wider—of the contemporary soul giving birth to that Art, the productions of which are all marked, as it were, with a gesture of pointing, just as in some pictures of Leonardo da Vinci there is at the margin of the canvas, instead of a signature, a little pointing hand. We speak not of the prophetic or other significance of the separate creations of new art, and not of the separate theoretical affirmations of new thought, but of the general orientation of the soul-landscape—of the characteristics of the inward and half sub-conscious trend of creative energy. In this sense we ask: "Is the soul of contemporary symbolism romantic or prophetic?"

Certain elucidations are indispensable. Why these two alternatives? Why not some third category? For this reason, that only in these two types, romantic and prophetic, of spiritual creativeness does Art cease to be calm and self-contained, shut within its own definitions; only in these does it seek to overstep the limits of the irrelevantly-beautiful to become the proclaimer of personality and its pretensions, pronouncing judgment upon life, imposing upon life its own laws, or at least opposing its laws to it. Either by prescribing for life the way in which it should go, or in all its sub-conscious struggle denying it in the name of the other life, Art, in these two types of spiritual creativeness, affirms itself not as a conditioned sphere of culture, but as a part of the general cultural energy, manifesting itself in fluid form—a form of proceeding and becoming—and

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therefore struggling towards formlessness, or unceasingly breaking up the old forms, being unable to accommodate in them its disproportionate ideas.

To think constantly of that which lies beyond the verge of the immediate understanding and beyond the natural circle of contemplated phenomena, is distinctive of contemporary symbolical culture ; and when our creative power accounts itself not only a true reflecting mirror of another vision of things, but the transfiguring power of new vision, it is clearly distinct from the self-reliant and inwardly equipoised classical Art. It presents in itself one of the dynamical types of cultural energy.

But why to Romanticism do we oppose Prophecy ? And may it not be that what seems Prophecy to the mystic will be defined by the historian as one form of Romanticism ? It may be seasonable here to distinguish a few of the more essential features of the two conceptions.

Romanticism is grief for the unrealisable. Prophecy is grief for the unrealised. Romanticism is the red of evening. Prophecy is the red of morning. Romanticism is hatred of fate, *odium fati* ; Prophecy is love of fate, *amor fati*. Romanticism quarrels with its irrevocable past ; Prophecy feels itself in tragic conjunction with it. The temperament of Romanticism is melancholy ; of Prophecy it is choleric. The impossible, irrational miracle is a postulate of the Prophetic ; to the Romantic it is simply the desire of the pious. For Romanticism the Golden Age is past—the conception of the Greeks ; for Prophecy it lies in the future—the idea of the Messiah.

This, of the Golden Age, is only an example. In order to calm at once the sceptics who say, "The Golden Age, however, never does arrive," we explain that by Prophecy we understand not the exact foreseeing of the future, but always some creative energy, anticipating and giving birth to the future. Romanticism has not, and does not wish to have, the power of historical child-bearing, and is opposed to every reality, especially that which is nearest, expecting something better from the impossible return of the past.

### II.

THE future alone can answer the question : "Is the soul of contemporary symbolism romantic or prophetic ?" We judge by enigmatical signs and by self-observance. The

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psychology of our culture is not the psychology of romanticism. To romantic dreaminess and romantic lassitude we oppose our voluntary act of mystical self-affirmation. Romanticism, if it is *only* romanticism, is simply little-faithed, and it is so because the centre of attraction of its faith is something not only outside itself, but outside the world, and it does not find in itself the power to follow the mystic *ab exterioribus ad interiora*. So that in the depths of inward experience the creative will may know and define itself as the moving beginning of life.

Schiller's little poem, "The Wanderer," is a characteristic example for the determining of the connection between romanticism and the mystically prophetic. The wanderer, having left his father's home, in childhood, in order to seek out the *Sanctuary*, where he will again discover all that he has abandoned, "all the dear earth transfigured in heavenly incorruptibility," has Faith as his leader, and Hope makes the endless and apparently vain road pleasant and alluring. The poem seems a mystical "Pilgrim's Progress" up to the very last line, where the deceiving mask is suddenly thrown aside, and we hear in the last words the voice of the romanticist: The earth under his feet has never led into the bright sky above him, and never will. *But There it will not be as Here.*

We hear this sigh otherwise in the verses of Vladimir Solovief, where "Till midnight with bold strides," the wanderer journeys to the shore of mystery and wonder, where—he knows this—there awaits, and waits long, the sacred temple gleaming with lights.

Romanticism longs for the objects of its dreams. We, for our part, invoke that which, it may be, we know in advance will be tragical. Our love to the future contains the victim's renunciation of all other destiny than his own, for we are connected with that future by subtle physical threads and cordial ties. Romanticism has only one soul; Prophecy—too often!—has two, one opposing, the other violently attractive. Prophecy is tragical by nature. The Romanticist too well remembers that his unrealisable is unrealisable; in his idea is neither the resistance nor the backbone indispensable for the tragic struggle. In the world-contemplation of the Romanticist, life new and untried is not confronted with living reality, but with dreams and the *simulacra inania*. Romanticism is essentially free from tragedy, but until it surrenders before reality,

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it loves the tragical grandeur and the exterior disorder of passion. The quick-scented soul of Prophecy often fears and delays to awaken the sleeping storm or the moving chaos.

The Romanticist calls up by name the shadows of the dead, and causes them to stir in their graves. We invoke spirits as yet unknown. Our symbols are not names ; they are—our silences. And even those of us who pronounce names are like Columbus and his crew naming as India the shore floating into vision upon the far horizon.

### III.

THAT of which we prophesy leads us to the presentiment of a new organic epoch, of an epoch when all the arts will be united organically. Even in the nineteenth century a whole series of symptoms surely revealed a tendency towards the re-integration of the forces of culture—towards their inner re-union and synthesis.

One of these symptoms was the appearance of the Russian novelists upon the world-arena. After them arose, in the circle of our elder cultured brethren, Wagner, and after him Nietzsche ; the former with his appeal for the union of the artistic energies in the synthesis of the arts, necessitating and absorbing into the focus of Art the whole spiritual self-definition of a people ; the latter with his doctrine of the new collective soul, for which will is knowledge, knowledge in the sense of affirmation, life, life—belief in the earth. Then, independently of Nietzsche, Ibsen willed us "dead to awaken." He rose up in arms against beauty broken into myriads of fragments by art ; hidden, spoiled, frustrated in the separate artistic creations, and he prophesied that beauty would all be known as life, and all life as beauty.

The idea of social reconstruction, evolving out of the contemporary phases of the struggle of the classes, has brought a demand for an organic epoch and has suggested new possibilities of cultural integration. We have witnessed also the evolution of the moral conscience accompanied by the destruction of ethics, raising to the place of former visions of duty, moral amorphism and a-dogmatism.

With the solution of moral imperatives there opened up the vast horizon of the mystic, the idea of the affirmation of

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the super-personal in the individual. Individualism struggled to allocate the diversely personal in the plan of the social ; but mystical super-individualism throws a bridge from individualism to the principle of universal brotherhood, causing the social idea to coincide with the formula of anarchy, the synthesis of unconditioned individual liberty and the beginning of collective unity.

The symptoms in the sphere of religion may be seen in the attempts to emphasise or evolve the pantheism in the Christian creed and to give a new, more spiritual revelation of the Theocratic idea.

Last of all in the realm of philosophy, the reaction against customs and methods of thought tells of the conquest of idealism itself, and the tendency towards primitive realism. Not Nietzsche alone felt himself more akin to Heraclitus than to Plato ; and not devoid of probability is the conjecture that the very near future will create types of philosophic creativeness resembling those of the pre-Socratic, pre-critical time, which Nietzsche named the tragical era of the Hellenes.

### IV.

IN the realm of symbolical art the symbol naturally discloses itself as the potentiality and germ of myth. The symbol reveals itself as myth-creativity, and the way of symbolism is already foreshadowed in the art of Wagner. The myth is not simply the accidental invention of a mind ; it is the postulate of collective self-definition—not fiction, not allegory or personification, but the deification of some existence or energy. A myth for the individual but not for the whole people is an impossibility, a contradiction in terms.

For the symbol by its nature transcends the personal, and has the power to convert the most intimate silence of the individual mystical soul into an organ of universal concord of thought and feeling. It is the word of power.

So Art, tending to myth-creativity, tends also to the type of a large, all-popular Art.

We have survived our critical epoch when our Art was "intimate" and have entered the realm of the art of world-forsakers and hermits, of super-individualists who have conquered the old individualism, of people more outwardly solitary, more inwardly united with the world, people not of personal but of universal wills and struggles in the realm of

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personal freedom. The art of these is already the universal art, though as yet only in the form of hidden energy.

Will these world-forsakers become the organs of myth-creativity, *i.e.* the creators and workmen of a new, popular art? The existence of the possibility would indicate the approach of an organic era in Art. But when such integration of artistic effort exists in reality, it must bring with it as one of its necessary developments a synthesis of the all-popular play and choric drama.

### V.

THE new epoch must of necessity bring with it a new architectural style, the expression of itself and its necessities, just as in the bygone development of the myth and the drama, the musical and poetic elements, the choir and choir-dance, prescribed the circular form, the ring-shaped enclosure, the circular colonnades.

So in the shaping of new forms we look to that dynamical and flowing architecture, the name of which is Music. Not fruitlessly is Music pre-eminent in the "choir-dance of arts." All the creativity of the future will arise "from the spirit of Music." Music, which from the time of Beethoven and Wagner, has occupied in our æsthetic conscience the place befitting her, now shows herself in the perspective of the future as predestined to the sovereignty and hegemony of the whole sphere of artistic creativity.

It is important for us to state this conclusion, for it has the most far-reaching influence in the consideration of the problems in hand.

### VI.

THE pole of the static in Art is shown by Architecture, in dynamics by Music. Of all the remaining arts the nearest to these extremes are sculpture and dancing—the first, to the extreme of static calm, the second, to that of dynamic movement.

But dancing is only the sequence of sculptural moments, and out of Music herself, out of her harmonious waves, there suddenly arises the plastic form, the sunshine-haloed melody, and stands with Apollonian appearance over the dark purple depths of the orgic surge. There is a static in music, and in the plastic a dynamic.

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The Sistine Madonna moves. The folds of her dress give a rhythm to her steps. We journey with her to the clouds. The sphere surrounding her is a treasure of active lives ; the whole air overflows with angel faces. The whole picture lives, it carries her. Before us is the harmony of heavenly powers, and in the harmony, like a moving melody, her own self ; in her hands her—Child, with look struggling towards the world, full of the will and the resolution of genius,—the Child whom she gives to the world, or rather, who Himself would persuade her to the world ; and with her yearns the whole sphere where she wanders.

In every production of art, even of plastic art, there is hidden music ; and this is not only due to the fact that the presence of rhythm is indispensable, but that the very soul of art is musical. The whole content of artistic imagery is always more than that which it has been sought to image. The creation of genius tells us of something extra, something deeper, more beautiful, more tragical, more god-like than that which it immediately expresses. In this sense it is always symbolical ; but that which it symbolises is for the mind uncomprehended, and in human words unwritten. And this incomprehensibility and immeasurability of its final sense should be felt in the work of art, if it is to show full æsthetic action. Thence derives the struggle to the unspeakable, that which builds the soul and life of æsthetic delight ; and the will, the impulse—is Music.

### VII.

LET us turn after these preparatory remarks on the static and dynamic forms of artistic energy, to the question of the ways of development open to the theatre beyond the previously indicated one of the integration of the arts.

It is impossible to be blind to the fact that the thirst for the new and as yet undisclosed theatre is an indefinite and vague one, as is also the general displeasure with the existent theatre. The artists then, who shall re-form the theatre, must anticipate and articulate the demands of society, struggling not so much for the sake of their own personal new creativeness as for the very principle and essence of change itself. They must understand, not only their own ordinary souls, but their interior souls ; not only

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their own intention, but the deeper and more complete intention of the Muse.

The scenic art is of a dynamic type, and the drama, developing itself in the pages of history and before our eyes, is energy expressing itself. It is not merely struggling to enrich our minds by new forms of beauty, but also striving to enter into our soul-life and become an active factor there. It wishes to bring about a definite happening in our souls. Surely even the ancients in their day spoke of the purification, *Katharsis*, of the soul of the spectator as the followed and attained purpose of true tragedy.

Since the days of that ancient definition, a significant tendency has shown itself in the world-wide historical development of the Drama.

According to Nietzsche, the drama was born from the soul of music, or to put it in more precise, historical terminology, from the choric dithyramb. In this dithyramb all was dynamic. Each participator in the liturgical choir was an active molecule in the orgic life, in the life of the Dionysian Communion. From the ecstatic ceremonial around the victim of sacrifice arose the Dionysian art of choric drama. The victim, at first real, but afterwards fictitious, was the protagonist—the hypostasis of the god of the orgy himself, describing inside the ecstatic circle the suffering of the hero who is devoted to destruction. The choir-dance was primordially the communion of the sacrificers and the participants in the sacrificial mystery.

The destiny of Dionysian art lies in the differentiation of the parts of its original formation. The dithyramb individualises itself into an independent species of lyric. In the drama the actions and sufferings of the hero-protagonist gain an exclusive significance, attracting an all-absorbing attention from those looking on, changing them from accomplices in the sacred action, or achievers and consummators of the ritual, into mere spectators of a holiday spectacle. The choir, early separated off from the crowd, became in its actions, less relevant to the central action of the hero: it became merely the accompaniment, reproducing the *peripeteia* schauspiel, zrelische]—only the "theatre" [*i.e.* spectacle, of the heroic lot. Thus grows the spectacle. The *mask* of the actor becomes more opaque, so that it is hardly possible for the face of the god of the orgy to penetrate it: the *mask* condenses into the *character*.

In the age of Shakespeare all was staked on the

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reproduction of this "character." And the French theatre of the seventeenth century, was that not the *ne plus ultra* of static art—the point whence it had necessarily to turn to the plastic—that epoch which locked up the music of Nature in the statuesque architectural forms of the gardens of Versailles? We are enraptured by the productions of this era. The hero stands like a statue, or rather, as a living mechanism of muscles, and the exigencies of his destiny are such that each point in his history conditions the whole; let but one link fall out in the chain of his story, and all is ruined. After this era the development of the drama becomes the demonstration of a mathematical theorem, the stage becomes an arena where the gladiators of passion and fate step on to battle. The crowd goes away, satisfied with the spectacle of the struggle, glutted with murder, but not washing away the blood of the victim.

### VIII.

THE new theatre once more tends towards a dynamic beginning. Is this not indicated in the drama of Ibsen, where in suffocating heat the electrically accumulated energies condense and then burst in the demoniacal magnificence of a few propitiatory words, not however clearing the atmosphere of its threatening tension? Or in the theatre of Maeterlinck, where we are led away into a labyrinth of mystery and abandoned before heavily-locked doors? Or in the Wagnerian drama of Tristan and Isolde, where the faces of the lovers arise in convulsions of passion out of the waves of dark chaos, simply to fall back and sink into them once more, as individuals paying with their own perdition the wages of sin—so that nothing remains before the bewildered gaze but the limitless purple ocean of the ever turbulent world-will, and the unquenched world-suffering.

More generally remarked of all, perhaps, is the principle of dynamism in the so-called realistic theatre, which wishes to banish the hero from the stage and put in his place "Life" itself—the great process of becoming. Those who go to contemplate these living-picture-like exhibitions of daily life know in advance that the new knot of life-powers to be tied before their eyes is not tied for the first time, and they disregard the catastrophe because they know that the action

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on the stage is only a fraction of the great general drama of living, in which they are themselves serious actors. The problem begins to lie partly in their own life. They are pleased if the dramatist raises a question which they themselves have to answer. In that, the dynamic beginning of the theatre is corroborated. The purpose of the theatre becomes not so much æsthetic as psychological. In the happenings on the stage the spectator recognises his own life and is horror-stricken considering it. The dark abysses of the soul are lit up momentarily with torches, and the spectators look down at the running light illumining the bottomless immeasurability . . . this is almost the Dionysian tremor, and the "frenzy on the verge of the dark abyss."

And if the theatre is to be anew dynamic, let it be so right through. Let us follow the example of the ancient leeches, who, in order to bring about favourable conditions in their patients, sought the aid of ecstatic music and exciting dance-rhythms. The theatre must definitely manifest its dynamic power and must consequently cease to be merely the spectacle. There are sufficient spectacles. We wish to gather together in order to create *collectively*, and not simply to contemplate—"zu schaffen, nicht zu schauen." Sufficient dramatis personæ, we ourselves desire to act. The spectator must become an actor, and participate in the action. The crowd of spectators must mingle in the choric body as in the mystical communion of the ancient "orgy" and "mystery."

### IX.

IN the Dionysian orgies, the ancient cradle of the theatre, each participator in the orgic action and in the orgic purification consecrated others, and was himself consecrated, to the end that the Divine présence might be attracted, and that each might receive the blessed gift.

The individualisation of the elements of the primordial action had for its consequence the limitation of the inner experience, and nothing more than the scrutiny of the spells of Dionysus was left to the participant. Aristotle therefore, the ancient theoretician of the drama, tells only of the passive experience of the spectators.

It is not surprising that the action itself moved away from the orchestra, from the round platform for the choir in the midst of the horse-shoe-shaped auditorium, up to the proscenium, raising itself thereby altogether above the level of

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the orchestra. There was drawn that enchanted line between the actors and the audience, the footlights, and two worlds were made foreign to one another, the one *only* acting, the other only being acted to. And there is no vein uniting the two separate bodies by a blood-circulation of creative energy.

The theatrical footlights have separated the audience, scarcely yet knowing itself as such, from those who profess to be simply *dramatis personæ*. The stage must stride over the footlights and take the people to itself once more, or the people must take possession of the stage. Such a purpose is already professed by some, but how can the purpose be realised?

It would be vain to think to realise it by naming in advance the character of the new theatre. Whether it be a "theatre of youth and beauty," or a "spectacle of human happiness without tears," the demand of Maeterlinck in a lately-advanced theory, the theatre of intimate remembrances or of predictive sentiment, of fragrance or of holy tremblings, the theatre of the platform or of the pulpit,—is of little importance. Not one of these programmes yields the means to disenchant the spell of the theatrical footlights.

There are possible ways of facilitating the intervention of the public in the action of the play; it is possible to invite the calling of catch-words or promptings from the midst of the spectators (such a procedure is not infrequent in the production of melodramas in France and Italy); it is not difficult, if once the matter in hand is political, to turn a hall into a public meeting, but of course none of this is the æsthetic solution of the problem.

Just as little are we helped forward by innovations purely exterior or in the setting of the piece. The contemporary theatre will remain the same in spirit whether the spectators have over their heads the blue open sky, or whether they see beyond the stage the volcanic outlines of the shores of the beautiful Lago Albano.

Fruitless, again, are the attempts to connect the problem of the footlights, and the question of what should be the object of the future drama. For there must be scope for all variety, for tragedy, comedy, mystery, fairy-tale, myth. The whole point lies not in *what?* but in *how?*—"how" understood alike in the musical and psychological sense, and in the sense of the working out of forms which shall be constituted to support the dynamic energy of the theatre of the future. We

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see no means to blend the stage and the auditorium except that which lies in the Dionysian element of dramatic action—the orchestral symphony and the independent musical and plastic life of the choir.

### X.

THERE are signs of the union of the drama and the so-called musical drama, now living their separate independent lives.

To take an example: Is it not significant that the drama of Maeterlinck, "Pelleas and Melisande" necessitates a musical interpretation and finds it in the music of Debussy? But what is this music but a *reductio ad absurdum* of the Wagnerian beginning of the "endless melody," or, if you like, of the recitative—the recitative which takes upon itself to obstruct the commencement of living speech and movement in the enchanted domain of music? There is but one step to make, and plain speech will have conquered the conventional servile singing which has already been reduced to such pallid debility as that of the recitative declamation.

It is clear that the musical drama should become simply a drama, and that music should preserve and confirm its sovereignty in the symphony and the choir. On the stage the actors will move and speak in the domain of reality, and in the body of the theatre the audience, now taken into the choir, and the orchestra will perform their various functions in choruses, solos, marchings, groupings, dances.

Of course the drama is attracted to music because only by her aid is she able to reveal fully her dynamic nature, her Dionysian essence. Music alone gives her the grand style. But Music must do more than be simply the support of popular artistry. It must be the moving and leading genius of the struggle towards the new forms. And Music must take the drama to herself, literally, because it is not in her power alone to solve the problem of the synthetic theatre.

### XI.

THAT Wagner excluded from his "choir dance of arts" the true dramatic actor and the real choir is an anomaly probably due to the slow conquest of tradition.

The choir was for Wagner the very content of the drama, the Dionysian element itself creating her. But

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this choir was a secret and inactive choir, an orchestral symphony signifying the dynamic foundation of being. This symbolical, speechless choir is the dumb Will rolling in incessant waves upon the phantasmal island of Apollonian dreams—the scenes, human faces, the voices of “endless melody.”

The choir is indeed allowed in “Felspiel” to act as molecules in the orgic life, but it only participates in action latently and symbolically. The Wagner hierophant does not give to the audience choral voices and words. Why? It has the right to that voice, for the drama presupposes, not a crowd of spectators, but a gathering of orgiasts.

But the orchestra expresses the metaphysical choir of the universal Will, and finds place within itself for a mystical throng of singers.—This objection falls through, because the song of the choir can only mingle with the symphony as a part, it cannot take its whole place. The symbol of the choral word is worthy to represent in the limitlessness of cosmic ecstasy the Dionysian soul of humanity. It is the mythical Hippa holding the serpent-twined cradle, in which lies Bacchus, newly born.

Wagner has gone half-way and halted. His synthesis of the arts is not harmonious and not full. His organic result is unsymmetrical, one-sided; his purposes contradictory. He puts forward the singer soloist and abandons in neglect speech, dancing, the multifarious vocality and the symbolism of the many. In the musical drama of Wagner as in the ninth symphony of Beethoven, dumb instruments exert themselves to speak and strain themselves to pronounce the sought for and unspeakable. In the ninth symphony the human voice alone says the Word. The choir must be constructed once more and given its ancient plenitude of power—without that there can be no common action, and the *spectacle* must predominate.

### XII.

THUS the synthetical-drama-form which we have deduced demands (1) that the scenic action arise from the orchestral symphony, that the symphony be the hidden and dynamical foundation of the action, the termination of the dramatic episodes interrupting her—for the Apollonian vision of the myth rises out of the sea of orgic agitation and

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vanishes once more into the same emotional depths, brightening them with its wonder as each cycle of musical purification is achieved—(2) that the choir become a part of the symphony and a part of the dramatic action—(3) that the actors speak, and not sing from the stage.

The pit of the theatre must be cleared away to make room for the choir dance and the choric play. Sloping gradually upwards from the pit on three sides, will be tiers of seats ; and on the fourth side, *i.e.*, in front of it, will be the stage. The orchestra must either remain unseen in the hollow assigned to it in the theatre of Wagner, or be disposed in other places. The conductor (*coryphaeus*) of the instrumental orchestra will stand in the gaze of all the people clothed in a dress matching the dresses of the choir, holding in his hand the magic wand and swaying it with the rhythmic gestures of the all-powerful magician and mystagogue.

The choir most easily imagined is a double one—a little choir immediately connected with the action, as in the tragedies of Æschylus ; and a choir symbolising the whole people, able to be augmented or diminished at will, as new participators enter or others pass out—a numerous choir invading the action only at moments of great crisis and of the full deliverance of the Dionysian energies, for example as does the dithyrambic choir in Beethoven's ninth symphony.

The first choir interplays constantly with the synthetical action ; the second is limited to the more important and more spirited rhythms, acting with the massive grandeur and collective authority given it by the people. In the independent life of the choir will be found scope for all forms of musical differentiation : by the continuous innovations in the programme of choric *intermezzi* the common orgic knowledge will express itself in uninterrupted creativeness.

Doubtless these changes do indicate the renunciation of the theatre of daily realism and of the yearning for theatrical illusion. But our contemporaries will hardly be alarmed by these sacrifices. Certainly the masses of the people with their ancient passion for the ideal style will not rebel. Moreover, realism and theatrical illusion have already said their last words it seems, and have been exploited to their last possibility. But, in any case, foreseeing as we do a new type of theatre, we shall not deny the possibility of the

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existence of other types such as those already in use, or even those that have grown old, or have outgrown their forms.

### XIII.

THERE is no doubt that the future theatre, as we see it, will show itself as the obedient instrument of that myth-creativity, which has to arise from symbolical art—if the latter ceases to be the property of the solitary, and finds harmonious echo in the expression of the popular soul. On this account the “godly and heroic tragedy” of the Middle Ages, like the antique tragedy and mystery of the far past, gives best of all an idea of the proposed synthetical action.

But the forms are more elastic than appears at first sight. The political drama is readily admitted, and for the first time obtains a choric echo, symbolical of the voice of the whole populace. We do not forget that the myth-creating tragedy of the Hellenes went often hand in hand with political drama, and that the people, keeping in the theatre the festival of the Great Dionysia, went directly afterwards to the national conclave and council of the oldest, throwing their ecstasy and their hate into the scales of public affairs. The same influence was exerted in society by the comedies in the grand style—the comedies of Aristophanes.

Only in the choric forms of the musical acting of the new comedy will strong wings of flight be found, only in these forms will comedy not cease to excite laughter, will she, on the contrary, resuscitate god-like, orgic laughter, beguiling the crowd to the world of the whimsical and the lawless, and, at the same time, serving as an organ of self-expression.

### XIV.

AMONG the diverse objections which may be raised are two, the removal of which will help us to supplement substantially our sketch of the future choric action. One of these objections is plainly and simply a doubt that the whole will be æsthetically satisfactory; the other concerns more the spirit of our theme, and requires some investigation.

The union of music and singing with speech is commonly found to be æsthetically unsatisfactory. We know it and dislike it already, for example, in the operetta. We must, however, keep in mind the fact that hitherto this

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unpleasant impression has been fostered by a certain type of theatrical production. It is intolerable when one actor is speaking plain unrhythmical prose, or even abrupt slang, and another is replying in songs or musical couplets ; and the union of singing and speaking on the stage of theatrical illusion is also unpleasant.

How differently we welcome the stepping out of the chorus of ancient tragedies, on the rare and happy occasions when we hear it really singing ! In the choric action of which we speak, the domain of music and the domain of rhythmic speech are not only distant from one another on the theatre floor, but the whole style of the new drama is so distinct from the contemporary style that it is impossible to predict inevitable disharmony from its musical and dramatic elements.

And if the contemporary footlights make the people speaking and gesticulating before them unrecognisable, is it not possible to find a satisfactory state of spectacular and acoustic conditions in the open air, or at least with daylight illumination ? Mechanical invention will not stand still whilst the theatre goes on, and all that it has yielded in the past, and all it must yield in the future, will be made use of in the evolution of the more convenient architectural form.

The style and diction of the new drama has also to be worked out. It is probable, however, that in the plays of the future the plots will be less complex, the action more direct, and the speeches less verbose.

### XV.

THE last remark leads us to the other objection. The new drama struggles inwardly into its own soul ; it is potent not so much by what it says or exposes as by what it does not say and hides. Mathematically deduced, the interior pole of the tragic is—silence. It is objected : How is this struggle towards silence compatible with the choric and collectively vocal base of the future drama ?

Our answer might be demonstrated by a paradox. But we know that individualism disappears in super-individualism, and that when the hero suffers and perishes in silence the choir expresses all that is meant to us. The more solitary the silence of the hero, the more necessary the choir. Thus in the Æschylean drama "Nubia" the heroine

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is silent to the conclusion of the action, but the spectator has lived with the choir and in the inner life of the choir.

When in the fifth symphony of Beethoven the hero and Fate-combater perishes after long and embittered quarrel with Destiny, what can console us but our portion to the power of ecstasy and Dionysian suggestion, what except the choir and the voice of the collective "I"? . . . And the unseen throng we hear gathering at some call or other in the distance of distances, the crowning of the hero, the making famous the conquest, or, it may be, only the ideal conquest, the conquest of one who has, perhaps, been conquered.

Only æsthetic dulness could permit us to endure as the end of a tragedy of Maeterlinck, "*Je crache sur toi, monstre !*"—not seeking the remission and purification from the pain of harrowing discord in the spells of the god-absolver.

### XVI.

THESE reflections allure us to the survey of the mystic nature of choric action. But that would demand an independent and separate method of investigation. Our only logical obligation here is to remind that the organisation of the future choric action is the organisation of popular art, and that the latter is the organisation of the popular soul.

The theatres of choric tragedy, comedy, and mystery should become the homes of creative and prophetic self-expression. In them will be finally solved the problem of the mingling of actors and onlookers in one organic body. Then the living and creative forces in the choir will cause the drama to devolve, not outwardly, but inwardly, not as a spectacle for outsiders, but as a great communion of all within the theatre walls.

Only then, may we add, will real political freedom exist, when the choric voice of the masses will be an authentic referendum of the true will of the people.

# Crowbit

By Edward Thomas

TWENTY-FIVE years ago the chief inhabitants of Crowbit lands were squirrels, the chief crops hazel nuts and flints. To-day it is a forlorn, declining, old-new settlement, with the looks of a wrecked suburb, and resembling a village only in that it has one idiot and one great house, every pane of every window in it broken by the stones of happy children. In another twenty-five years the old condition will probably be restored. It is the highest land on a high plateau, and the plough has never been over it. The greater part is treeless, but the slopes bear copses of poor oaks, and in the bottoms are families of ancient beeches and enough grass for many rabbits. One straight main road crosses it now as it has long done, but for some reason it is avoided, and in spite of an old man always bent over it the weeds and grass grow apace. The other roads are, and were, broad green lanes deeply fringed with untended hazel and bracken and the purple and gold flowers that love to be among bracken. Even twenty-five years ago no tract of Southern England was richer in green lanes, almost without rut or footprint. Perhaps a gipsy came one day, but was gone the next. One farmhouse there was, and the only reason for that seemed to be to avoid the scandal of so large a district in this prosperous country being without one. Every year or two it was partly painted and the garden half-weeded, lest the predestinate tenant should see it and pass by; once or twice there were tenants—not farmers, but a poor middle-class family with an indigent mother or sister, or children too young for school—for not more than six months. The great house was at the very edge of Crowbit, turning its back on the misty plateau, its face towards a better land of dairy and corn in comfortable proportions. It was a square grey house among oaks, dull and substantial, a perfect breeding-place for men about town, like the Salanders. They could not live there because the consumption of cigarettes and spirits which it enforced gave it a reputation

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for unhealthiness and costliness; but they had been happy there as children and they liked to come down in the autumn for pheasants, in the summer for trout—not in their own land, which had not one flash of running water. The Salanders had some reason for expecting trouble; in fact, the one reason against it was that it had long been delayed. The only way out was work, and that had seemed impossible, until one day a low but amusing friend of George Salander made a proposal. The lord of the manor had just landed a game trout, and held it in his hand, with a sunny, hard smile, saying in compliment, "Jolly plucky little beggar," before putting his thumbnail deep into the spine of a creature which he knew had done its best to give him pleasure. At Johnson's proposal he smiled in the same way.

Within a year the plan was a success. The healthy situation and lovely scenery of Crowbit, the fitness for poultry and small fruit farms, and the convenience of a five-mile-distant railway station upon a branch line, were enthusiastically advertised by Johnson, the railway company, the Press, and, in a quiet way, by Salander himself. The newcomers were old and middle-aged men who had saved a little money in shops, young men at their first venture, and men no longer young at their last. They enclosed parallelograms of an acre or half an acre with wire netting; they planted trees which died; they dug up plots of innocent grass where forthwith exulted the hardiest and most offensive weeds; they erected low buildings of corrugated-iron, white-framed windows and doors, and many lace curtains. The old farm-house received a corrugated-iron roof from ridge to eaves over its thatch and the name of "The Laurels," and inside or outside of it could be heard a cheerful baritone voice singing "The Boys of the Old Brigade." Many lengths of the green lanes were furrowed hither and thither by heavy wheels, and the mud well mixed with broken glass, crockery, and coloured paper. Gaps were torn in the hedges for gateways, and to allow a view when the mist cleared. Everywhere the sound of hammers on deal and corrugated iron. Chickens made paths in all directions. Faces of extreme cheerfulness or extreme anxiety went up and down riding bicycles or eagerly pushing them.

Salander had ready money. He came down to see the place and told Johnson, "It is like a damned circus,

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only it won't go away": he was genuinely enraged with Johnson.

Some of the people did, nevertheless, go away before long. Some who had hoped they would be isolated were wedged in a dense row; others found it lonely in a lane with no sound but their own chickens; some longed for the town, some for the country. But enough had been sold to overcome Salander's distaste; he was able to send his idle eldest son, Aylwin Salander, to a mining school, and later on to Canada.

Some of the invaders stayed. The Browns, for example, kept to their little red house, and in ten years' time they alone remained of the original settlers. The slope up to their front door and its white wooden steps was carefully mown and broken into beds of lilac and laburnum, roses, sunflowers and nasturtiums in their seasons. Of the half-dozen spruce trees only one had lived through the first summer, and this was the nearest to the house. It was absurdly near, as Mrs. Brown pointed out; it grew apace, and its branches brushed the wall of the house. On the night when her first child was born, and on other nights she could then remember, she was tormented by this tree rasping the corrugated iron in the rainy wind. "You devil tree," she said to it when first she stepped out with little Helen in her arms; but she let it remain, and it continued to flourish while its companions rotted very slowly in the ground. Helen flourished like the tree, which she watered all through the summers; and Salander, passing by a shed one day where she was playing, threw away his cigar to have a good look at her. Outside it was a day of glory in the sky and of harvest peace and abundance on the earth; inside, the child was in deep shadow, and looked down at him with eyes bright, glowing cheeks, rosy lips, teeth glistening, all the more lovely for the shadow which her face overcame and seemed to illuminate like a lantern. He tried to talk to her, and she said "yes" or "no," or sometimes nothing. He remembered, as he looked at her, an old countrywoman's remark to him when he was a boy: "Birds have great wisdom; not one of them except the cuckoo has said a thing men can understand, not since the Creation." Before he left, she reminded him still more of a bird, for she suddenly put on a face like an owl, which was evidently a favourite accomplishment. This she maintained for about half a minute, and then broke into

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laughter, under cover of which Salander departed. He did not profess to know anything about women until they were seventeen or so, and none that he had ever troubled with was like a bird; yet his complacency was hurt by the bird-like Helen. She grew more and more beautiful, to the confusion of old, and, afterwards, of young Salander. She had a peering face, narrowing down to the chin and sharpened forward—a face that asked many questions no man could answer. She had olive eyes, long dark lashes, and dark eyebrows, a rather more than usually projecting mouth which seemed to make the whole world wreath in a smile with it; her skin was nothing rarer than a damask rose; her pale yellow hair was open to the imputation of tow, inclined to stick together in tails and only just rippled out of the straight, yet radiant and original, whether it swished about her in running or was held across her mouth for her to bite while she spoke; perhaps only her ears could be called perfect, being of a unique simple curve up, round and down, and of a subtlety within suggesting, with even a shade of painfulness in its subtlety, the hidden brain which it furnished with the sounds of the world. Many other women had some of these elements in more perfection, not a few had them all; there was never one who combined them in these proportions to this result, which was so much more than the sum of them all that old Salander could pretend to deny it only when there was a Crowbit mist moaning and shaking the spruce against Helen's home, and the rain drummed on corrugated iron and he felt in his teeth that he was old. He was, in fact, deeply impressed by her beauty. It was the most surprising fact within his knowledge that this brand-new, rasping new, never-to-be-old settlement and two plain parents could produce one like Helen, could nourish and preserve her year after year while she ran up and down the deep-rutted lanes and over the scratched flinty fields among the chickens, climbed his great beeches in the bottoms, still mainly belonging to the squirrels, and, later on, raced about on a rattling bicycle with a milk can or a parcel from the station. She wore bad clothes, always torn, often dirty—but so much the better! they gave her laughing loveliness another triumph. It was always laughing, though not perhaps for what Salander or most others would have called happiness. Her mother was angry with her for laughing at nothing; she did not know, she believed the child did not know, why this laughter;

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and she accused her of pretence, the more certainly because the gravity of her eyes was never disturbed by it. At school she learned only to fear school teachers and lofty rooms with shiny pictures. All her wisdom was in the quickness of her feet and the light of her eyes. Some thought her daft.

When Helen was seventeen, old Salander died suddenly. Aylwin had returned from Canada, something worn by indolence, but still handsome. He was a perfect Salander externally—had a neat head, close-cropped mouse-coloured hair, regular features and excellent teeth, but also a melancholy and rash futility that grinned at the masterly military exterior. He wooed Helen outright. She was now a woman of a great new beauty, neither of the town nor of the country. She was the offspring of the union or conflict between country and town, the solitude of Crowbit and the corrugated iron. The union showed itself in the astonishing blend of the wild and the delicate in her beauty, in her uselessness—she could do nothing with her hands or her head, she could not even sing, though her voice was worthy of her—in what the neighbours called her stupidity or imbecility. She was like a deer enchanted into a woman's form, nothing like a deer except sometimes in her gesture of suspicion, and yet a deer underneath. Salander used to come down to the "King's Head" at Newton Salander for several days at a time, and make opportunities to see the wandering Helen instead of fishing. At some visits he sat down and drank peaceably for hours, to fend off the sad looks of Crowbit; at others, he would not touch alcohol, for the same reason; in both moods he would talk of fitting out two rooms at the manor-house, of keeping fowls, and Arcadianising. It was pretty well known why he came, and Mr. and Mrs. Brown, though not yet consulted, saw no reason to be sorry, since it might do them good, and would at least take the solitary and useless girl off their hands. The neighbours blamed sometimes them and sometimes Helen when they knew her entire liberty with Salander. They accused the Browns of thrusting her upon him. His friends, on the other hand, thought it would be quite unnecessary for him to marry her.

Helen herself seemed to take no notice of him, to be the only person who could not see what was happening, until suddenly it was known that she and Salander were engaged to be married. No guessing could explain it, but it was

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said that he had lain in wait for her in one of her secret places, that there for some reason she had struck him so that he fell against a beech root and was stunned, and that then in mortal pity she had tended and kissed him back to consciousness.

After this apparently he could do anything with her, except persuade her to leave "Fair View," where she was born. She used to compare herself to the solitary spruce tree. She had never lived anywhere else, and said that she never could. As soon as possible Salander meant to take her right away from it.

After the wedding Helen was gay and gentle with all, until she came to the gates of the manor-house. She trembled and leaned heavily on her husband's arm, and he was all but carrying her as they approached the door. At the door itself she was powerless; he lifted her in, helpless and drooping as a sheaf of barley.

She is now what all would call mad. She fell into silence, untranslatable sounds, and her old laughter. She refused to sleep anywhere except in her birthplace, and as she was not admitted there she stayed out of doors. She thought that she was a spruce fir and spreading out her arms with a grave look she shivered and made a sound like the wind in fir needles without opening her lips, and having gradually become silent she burst out into laughter and turned away. Salander was much consoled with by her parents. In his watchfulness he was often out all night following her until he was tired and she disappeared. His fowls arrived, but he made a present of them to his father-in-law. In a few weeks he departed, leaving the key in the door with the hope that she might return. He comes down now and then to see if she is changed, but when he appears she runs fast away. They have relented at "Fair View," and she sleeps there once more. She works hard in the garden and among the fowls, and goes on errands. If the little boys of Crowbit stop her and say, "Helen, what is that noise?" she stands still, slowly extends her arms and moans like a fir tree, and the boys grin at one another until out comes her wild laughter, and they grin no more. The people at Crowbit are not proud of her, though she is still as beautiful as the dawn; but at the next village an old woman says it is good to have one idiot in a place, and very lucky—"It keeps things quiet," she says.

# A New Study of English Poetry

By Henry Newbolt

## II—POETRY AND RHYTHM

WE commonly use the word "poetry" in two distinct senses, and when we hear it used in either we have, as a rule, no difficulty in understanding which sense is intended. If we are told, for example, that "there is very little poetry in Crabbe," and also that "for twelve years Crabbe's outflow of poetry was constant and voluminous," we realise that the first of these statements refers to poetry as the element which distinguishes the poetic from the prosaic; the second to the mass of work in which that element, whatever its richness or poverty, is actually embodied. But by making the same word do duty at one time for the substance or nature of poetry, and at another for the form in which it is externalised, we have fostered a delusion—the very common belief that prose is prose and verse is poetry, that the essential difference is the difference of form, and not of substance. It is true that there is a very intimate connection between poetry in the true sense of the word and rhythm or metrical expression, but it is a connection which is not invariable or essential. In order to keep this clear, in my last article I adhered throughout to one meaning for the word poetry. When I asked "What is Poetry?" I was asking one question only, "What is the distinction between the poetic and the prosaic?" and I found it to be this—that the one is the expression of the æsthetic or intuitive activity, the other the expression of the intellectual or logical activity of the human spirit. An intuition or set of intuitions, once grasped and expressed in words, will be a poem—good or bad—even though the words take the form of what is commonly called prose; a set of logical or intellectual judgments will be none the less prose though they are stated in some form of verse. A work of art in words is always poetry; a work of science, in whatever form of words, would always be prose.

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This is strictly true, but it is a truth not always recognised. I shall not be surprised if I hear the retort, "Then a novel is poetry."—Certainly a novel is essentially poetry: it is written without metre, and it contains a large amount of prosaic detail and dialogue—it may even include general reflections by the author—but it is at bottom the expression of an intuition, a vast and complex intuition amounting to the vision of a new world created by the novelist's imagination. If it is a good novel, the statements of fact and prosaic judgments embodied in it will have been melted down into one mass with the purely æsthetic element. This is generally realised, though without full consciousness of its meaning. Most readers would admit that Mr. Hardy's novels, for example, are more poetical, contain less of the unfused prosaic elements than (say) those of Zola, whose realistic detail is disproportionate and too often inserted cold. Fielding's "Tom Jones" has often been called an epic; Mr. Henry James's last novel, "The Outcry" is no less obviously a drama. But to all work of this kind we customarily allot the name of fiction, and deny that of poetry, which we reserve for such verbal expression as is more strictly rhythmical.

We may pass on then to consider poetry in its second meaning, to inquire why poetry and rhythm are so intimately connected, that when we speak of one we generally imply the other, and afterwards we may analyse the different systems upon which poetical rhythms have been and are now being created. In this, as in our former analysis, we shall have two main purposes. The first will be, as before, to do something towards destroying the common or pedagogic view of poetic art, the view that metre is a kind of decoration applied as it were externally and to be judged by an external standard, a standard of beauty or fitness or even of mere correctness. The vast majority of what are generally called well-educated persons in this country, have in the very process of their education, been impressed with the belief that metre is an arrangement of language which can be judged by the application of a mechanical test, and that the poet who produces a line which does not answer to the test is a fit subject for correction by any critic who can point out the discrepancy. It is true that we are more enlightened than we were: there is a public which has learnt to smile at the reviewer who declares that a line "will not scan," or that it contains a "trochee"

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where it should have had an "iamb," without considering whether it was ever intended to "scan," or whether there is anything in English verse which can be treated as the absolute equivalent of a Greek or Latin trochee. But if such a criticism should appear it would still find a ready acceptance with many—with nearly all those, for instance, who contributed to a recent correspondence in the *Spectator* on the subject of "The English Hexameter." And the fallacy does appear, in much subtler forms. In the February number of the *Poetry Review* a critic, who is himself a poet, and whom I always read with great interest, speaks of his struggle "to find out what has been done, once for all, better than it can ever be done again, and to find out what remains for us to do." Another even more distinguished writer has lately made emphatic use of the word "pattern" in elaborating his description of poetry. I do not attribute any heretical intention to either of these writers, but it is within my own knowledge that they have been quoted to support the theory of an external standard, of types of beauty to which poems should conform. But if every work of art is simply the expression of the artist's intuition, it is evident that a pattern would be useless, since the intuitions of two different minds could never be expressed by the same form: nor can anything in art be said to have been "done once for all," since if it were "done again" by another hand—used, that is, to express the intuition of another spirit—it would be no longer what had been done before. It is a matter of common experience among poets that where a metre already well known is used again by a new writer, it often passes unrecognised: being, indeed, so changed with the change of subject and personal rhythm as to be no longer, in any vital sense, the same metre at all.

Our second motive for inquiry will be the desire to understand the position of living poets with regard to rhythm. This is no question of small technicalities which do not concern the reader: it is a matter on the right understanding of which depends the attitude of each generation towards the most masterful and original of the poets whom it produces. With the majority of those who read English poetry the charm of familiarity seems to be the most powerful. A new song—to an old tune: a new story, but told in a voice that we know: that is the general demand. From time to time a writer appears who gives forth, probably rather from lack of assimilative power than

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by deliberate choice, a mere echo of one of these voices of the past: he is almost sure of a certain popularity, and the paradoxical catchword of his admirers is that "he has the authentic note" of Keats, of Milton, of Shakespere—or perhaps of all three. This is regrettable: an art that lived by imitation of the past would be an art in full decadence. But it is easy to be too quick with an accusation of this kind: for it is natural that in a great literature, flourishing through many generations, there should be influences and lines of legitimate descent: a man born in one century may, like Chatterton, have the habit of thought and feeling characteristic of another, or express himself, like Francis Thompson, in a voice which is not less his own because it is unmistakably like the voice of his spiritual ancestors. On the other hand, the founders of the future, those who are in their generation "full-welling fountain heads of change," will often be innovators in expression as well as in thought, and the sooner we understand their rhythm the sooner we shall enter into possession of gifts that can be conveyed to us in no other way.

What then is Rhythm? What is the nature, the origin, the historical development of poetic Rhythm?

Of rhythm in general the most significant thing that we can say is this, that it seems to be always present where there is life. The waves of light and sound which give the world to our sight and hearing, the pulses of our own blood and breathing, are familiar examples: but science has traced many deeper processes to the same starting point, and Professor Bateson's inquiries into the tendency of life to reduplication are perhaps the very latest aid to our understanding of natural law. It is not surprising then, if rhythm is of the essence of vitality, that it should appear in human speech, and especially in poetic speech, the expression of those emotions in which man lives most intensely. And we find that, in fact, every nation has its own speech-rhythm, apt for the expression of its daily life, and gaining or losing in beauty from the dignity or the degradation of that life. We find also that there are more regular rhythms than these, more regular recurrences or reduplications, which belong only to the poetry of the several languages. I have spoken before of the two worlds in which we all live—the worlds of science and poetry, the world which nature has given us, and the world which we have by the imagination of the thoughts of the heart

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made for ourselves. When we pass from the one to the other our words tend by a natural instinct to step in rhythm as a gesture more expressive of the loftier and intenser life which is lived there. Perhaps the most primitive instance of this known to us is the very familiar one of Hebrew poetry. The rhythm of this is a parallelism, or a simple reduplication of each phrase in a slightly different form.

"Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness,  
And princes shall rule in judgment,  
And a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind,  
And a covert from the tempest:  
As rivers of water in a dry place,  
As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

It is noticeable that in the prophetic books such passages as this occur frequently, but as a rule in the dramatic parts only, and not in the narrative. The same change, from speech-rhythm to poetic rhythm, is constantly to be seen in the prose work of English writers: it is probably always unintentional, and is commonly considered a fault of style. But this condemnation is too indiscriminate: it may be that such a transition is sometimes abrupt and meaningless, but there is no reason why it should not be simply expressive. The instinct is the same instinct that was working in the Hebrew; the elevation of mood beyond a certain point tends to force the utterance into a more marked rhythm, and if the effect is beautiful in a translation of Amos or Isaiah, it may be beautiful also in the mouth of an English seer or prophet. Such was John Ruskin, and his eloquence often rose into poetic rhythm; as in the peroration where he exhorts his hearers to "Reverence, for all that is gracious among the living, great among the dead, and marvellous in the Powers that cannot die." I have marked with pleasure the same instinctive grace in the poetical stories which Mr. Francis Bain sends back to us from the East, and in Mr. Delamare's highly imaginative romance of "Henry Brocken." By their sense of beauty these writers are moved to rhythm at certain moments as naturally as a child is moved to dance for joy.

In fact Poetry is in its origin more akin to dancing than to song. It may resemble song in certain respects, but it cannot be derived from it. Rhythm is before song: song depends but little upon words, and the effects of the finest music are not the effects of poetry. The rhythms of poetry can be conveyed to a listener without words, melody

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or tune of any kind: as in the game of our youth, when we used to drum upon a table, without speaking, the measure of any well-known line or stanza, and challenge each other to guess the words.

It seems reasonable, then, to believe that the descent of poetry is this: the rhythmic instinct of life begot the movement of dancing: dancing was accompanied and regulated by the beating of the measure in monotone: and this drum-rhythm was then impressed upon language, which became thereby more beautiful, more emotional, and more memorable.

We have now come to a point of the most crucial importance. It was impossible that a perfectly regular rhythm should be fully impressed upon language, because language already had a rhythm of its own, necessary to its meaning, and never wholly to be obliterated. In poetry as we know it—I am speaking of poetry in the European languages—there is no such thing as perfect or rigid rhythm. That is a fiction of those who have read the classics without understanding. What there has always been—whether in Greek or Latin, or in modern poetry—is an antagonism, a balance, a compromise, between the metrical ictus, the drum-beat which I have imagined, and the common speech-rhythm of the language. Poetic rhythm is, in short, neither strict mechanical rhythm nor free speech-rhythm: it is speech limited by metric law, or Prosody. To illustrate this it is only necessary to open any poet at any page. When Shakespeare wrote “Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell,” he was limiting himself to ten syllables for the line, but he was not mechanically arranging those syllables so that they should be alternately unstressed and stressed. He did not intend his line to be read thus:—

“Angéls are bríght still, thóugh the bríghtest féll,”

any more than Keats when he wrote “Thea, Thea, Thea, where is Saturn?” intended it to be pronounced

“Theá, Theá, Theá, where ís Satúrn?”

In fact, neither in the work of these poets, nor in that of any others, is verse of the strictly regular form, “ritum ritum ritum ritum,” found to occur with any frequency. It suits Tennyson’s mood best, and produces the desired effect of luxurious monotony; at times, nearly one in three of his lines will be of this type. But in more

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masculine verse it is comparatively rare, and most of the beauty of the lines and all their variety is gained by the skill with which the woof of speech-rhythm is continually thrown athwart the warp of the metrical type. A master hand like Swinburne's will throw the shuttle a hundred times and produce no less than fifty different effects. All but one of these are departures from the strict type, but they are not wholly arbitrary, they are governed by the poet's prosody, the rules which he adopts for his art. It may be asked why, if so much liberty is allowed, there should be any restraints at all?—why make laws for your lawlessness? What you are seeking is beautiful rhythm; why not simply choose out the most beautiful natural speech-rhythm, and take no thought for a metrical type which you do not mean to submit to? In answer to this it can only be said that the result of such an attempt has always been failure; it would seem absolutely necessary to have some recognised scheme as a basis, and such a scheme, owing to the nature of language, must be in some respects artificial. Without the help of this artificial restraint dignity is not attained, and the hearer loses the most characteristic pleasure of rhythm, the pleasure of having a certain expectation satisfied, though it is never satiated. Blank verse, just because it is the freest of all our metres, is the most liable to these dangers. Since any one syllable in a blank verse line may be either long or short, accented or unaccented, the commonest forms of language may be used in it without difficulty, and whereas in stricter forms of verse their effect might be one of dignified and moving simplicity, in this metre they will become mere doggerel or bad prose. The following lines are taken at random from Cowper's "Task," and are by no means unrepresentative of what he could from time to time descend to:—

"Scenes must be beautiful which daily viewed  
Please daily, and whose novelty survives  
Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years:  
Praise justly due to those that I describe."

I will quote a still more striking instance, in which the descent is no doubt intentional. Mr. Abercrombie\* has put these verses into the mouth of Ahasuerus, a King who speaks often with barbaric force and dignity, but in the last

\* In his new volume, "Emblems of Love," p. 24.

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line of this speech exposes a degraded thought in fitly degraded rhythm:—

“ Happy art thou, Vashti, to have wedded  
One who so dearly rates possession of thee.  
Better it is to spend my heart on thee  
Than on any of the women that I have.”

For any but a purely dramatic purpose, such a line would be intolerable.

A prosody, then, or metric law, there must be, to save the gesture from becoming invertebrate. Of what nature is the law to be? On what principle is it to be founded? Language—in Europe—admits of several systems; three have been used in the poetry with which we are familiar, and as these have been developed one out of another, I shall describe them in their historical order.

\* The first system was founded on quantity, and was the invention of the Greeks. It was highly characteristic of their genius, for it was scientific—the result of deliberation—since it involved a new control of the method of speech. In their language, as in ours, the syllables in ordinary speech were of many gradations of quantity, and were individually capable of variation. It was necessary to reduce the number of gradations, and to make the values constant. This was done by an arbitrary convention: the syllables of all the words in their language were divided into two classes only, long and short, one long syllable being in quantity the equivalent of two short ones. The Latins borrowed this system, and enforced it with even greater rigidity, for certain freedoms which the Greeks allowed themselves occasionally, are scarcely to be paralleled at all in the best Latin verse. But both Greeks and Latins, though they wrote by quantity, continued to speak mainly, as we do, by stress: and neither tried to arrange the words in the line so that the speech-stress should coincide precisely with the metrical ictus or quantitative pattern.

I will give a simple illustration of this. The word “Trojanas” is by quantity made up of three equally long syllables (Trō-jān-ās): but in speech it consists of one stressed syllable between two unstressed, and is pronounced “Trojánas.” In fact, in this word, and in a multitude of others, stress and quantity do not correspond. The happy result of this is that a poem like Virgil’s *Æneid*, containing twenty-four thousand lines, all made on one pattern, with

\* I have to thank Mr. Robert Bridges for invaluable suggestions for this section.

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slight variations, is no longer uniform or monotonous when it comes to be read, because any two lines, though made up of exactly the same longs and shorts, will often have their stresses in quite different parts of the line. The dead mechanical pattern will be uniform in both, but the two living lines will each have their own clearly marked individuality. I open a chance page of my Virgil, and I find not two but three lines close together, in which the quantities are absolutely identical, thus:—

"Trojanas ut opes et lamentabile regnum . . . .  
Sed si tantus amor casus cognoscere nostros . . . .  
Instar montis equum divina Palladis arte . . . ."

The quantitative pattern is identical, but when we come to read them properly we find at once that the first line has four (or perhaps five) stresses:

"Trojánas ut ópes et lamentábile régnum

the second has five,

Sed si tántus ámor cásus cognóscere nóstros

and the third has six,

Instar móntis équum dívina Pálladis árte."

Moreover, these stresses, except the two towards the end, fall for the most part in quite different places in the line. The lines are therefore entirely the same in quantity and almost entirely different in stress-rhythm, and it is this varying contradiction of the two elements which makes the pleasing effect of the verse and gives it its flexibility for expression. This warp-and-woof effect is analogous to that which we have already observed in English blank verse: the only difference is that while the common speech-rhythm of the language used is in both cases the woof, in the Latin the warp is a quantitative pattern, actually though faintly present, but in the English it is a pattern of five regular beats seldom actually present in the verse but always existing in the memory of the reader or hearer. It is strange that Englishmen, well accustomed in their own verse to this perpetual compromise between the type and the reality, should be so generally unable to realise the existence of a similar effect in the Latin. The sham hexameters of Longfellow, Clough, and Kingsley, combined with schoolboy recollections of "scanning," seem to have convinced the educated reader that stressed und unstressed syllables are the same as long and short syllables, that there are always six stresses in a

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hexameter, placed at regular intervals, and that all such lines as those which I have quoted should be read as having one and the same rhythm, a rhythm exactly the same as the line

"Here we doggedly tramp, we tramp, tramp, tramp in a treadmill."

while the rest of Virgil's music is confined to such variations as

"Doggedly here we tramp,"

or, more expressive still,

"Doggedly, doggedly here we doggedly tramp in a treadmill."

Even the barbarians knew better. On the break-up of the Roman Empire the law of quantity perished: stress only remained, but it was the right stress, the stress of common speech. Commodian, for instance, an African poet of the fourth century, knew nothing about the artificial rules of long and short: but he knew how Virgil's lines were read by the Romans, and he imitated the arrangement of their stresses though not that of their quantities: he wrote

"In talibus spēs est vēstra de Chrīsto refēcto."

and was satisfied that it was a good hexameter, because though it contains three false quantities (all unknown to him), its stresses are the same in number and position as those of Virgil's line

"Dardánidōe infēnsi pōenas cum sāguine pōscunt."

By this curious method of imitation, he kept all the variety of the old rhythm, though he lost its beauty: and, incidentally he did us the great service of emphasising the fact that the Latins did not read their poetry on the tramp-in-a-treadmill principle.

Quantity then perished as a base for prosody, and in spite of Commodian's *tour de force* the system of Latin verse seems to have fallen almost completely into ruin. Some remnants of a tradition were preserved, in Mr. Bridges' belief by the writers of the early Latin hymns. The new prosody of European verse which was evolved from these was a syllabic system, and may be tabulated as follows:—

- (1) A line consists of a fixed number of syllables.
- (2) Extra syllables are only allowed when elision can be supposed to take place.
- (3) Any syllable in the line may be long or short.

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- (4) Any syllable may be stressed or unstressed, though in practice there are limits to this licence, and in particular
- (5) A line must contain so many stressed syllables and so placed, as to content an ear haunted by the idea of regular alternate stresses.

The heirs of the dead Roman Empire all adopted this system sooner or later, but with characteristic differences. The Italians by a very free use of the fiction called elision relieved themselves of the rigid numerical restriction of syllables. Dante's verses, nominally of five feet each, have in reality any number of syllables from eleven to sixteen: in the line "Poscia ch' io ebbi il mio dottore udito" there are sixteen, besides one which is lost in the true elision, "ch' io." The French, having a much less marked speech-stress, kept the syllabic principle more strictly. Both added rhyme to their versification, and rhyme proved to be valuable in several ways. First—and this was probably its original purpose—it pleased the hearer by adding a fresh set of expectations and satisfactions. Secondly, it helped to develop metrical form, for it led on from couplets to alternating rhymes, and so to the various stanzas. Thirdly, it was valuable to the composer of poetry in steadying him, in restricting the too great freedom allowed him by a system so loose and feeble as the syllabic prosody.

"For rhymes the rudders are of verses,  
With which like ships they steer their courses."

It is not difficult, then, to see the advantages and disadvantages by which the future of rhyme will be decided. For dramatic, narrative, or reflective poetry it will always be unnecessary: both because such work is by its context independent of trivial ornament, and because it needs to approach more nearly to ordinary speech-rhythm than is possible if rhyme is to alter the position of the words. But in lyric poetry, which aims first at beauty, and is suggestive rather than explanatory, it will probably always be retained.

Rhyme was introduced into England by Norman minstrels after the Conquest, and syllabic rhymed verse, first French and afterwards English, made a certain progress in this country until the fourteenth century, when a much greater output of poetry suddenly appears and reveals a new situation. The Anglo-Saxons had for centuries had a prosody of their own, which was not syllabic but based on

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stress, with alliteration added. Most lovers of poetry have some acquaintance with the "Vision of Langland concerning Piers Plowman," or with the similar poem called "Richard the Redeless" on the deposition of King Richard II. The latter has these lines on the extravagance in dress of the young man of the period:—

"Now by the law of Lydford, in land ne in water,  
Thilk lewd lad ought evil to thrive  
That hangeth on his hippis more than he winneth,  
And doubteth no debt, so Dukis him praise,  
But beggeth and borroweth of burgess in towns  
Furris of foyne and other fell ware,  
And not the better of a bean, though they borrow ever."

The carrying power of the stresses is here so great that a few syllables more or less do not break down the metre, nor is rhyme needed to strengthen it. It has the faults of hardness and monotony, but it shows clearly that the old English verse possessed a vitality which would not easily be conquered by the invasion of the syllabic system. The struggle between the two lasted for centuries: the course of it was briefly this. The orthodox system was the syllabic; but nonconformity was steadily encouraged by the English sense of stress. Blank verse was bound to have exactly ten syllables to the line, but our greatest poets gave it eight, nine, eleven, or twelve when they felt moved to do so. Lyric metres were even more loosely written, with abrupt bare stresses or skipping short syllables, the understanding being that so long as the rhythm is preserved, that is, so long as the stresses are sufficiently represented, a good deal of illegality in the syllables will be condoned. Milton, himself the boldest of all makers of rhythm, was apparently conscience-stricken at this illegality, and invented a set of plausible fictions by which he could prove himself to be still within the orthodox syllabic fold. But the nonconformity went on as before. Sooner or later it was sure to occur to someone to ask whether this organised hypocrisy was worth keeping up: whether stress pure and simple might not be a sufficient base for a recognised prosody. To how many it actually did occur we do not know: but Coleridge was the first to make the proposal in print. In the preface to "Christabel" he says, "I have only to add that the metre is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded on a new principle, namely, that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables. Though

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the latter (the syllables) may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four."

This preface is apparently very seldom read: or perhaps it is, as Mr. Bridges has said, too simple to be understood. Certainly nothing could possibly be simpler: you set out to write a poem, say in short couplets; you express your story as you conceive it, in words placed in their natural order, with their natural pronunciation and stresses: when you have got four beats or stresses, with such unstressed syllables as they happen to carry with them, your rhythm is complete, and you pass to the next line:

"'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,  
And the owls have awakened the crowing cock—"

See what variety is obtainable even in so plain a metre.

"Is the night chilly and dark?  
The night is chilly but not dark."

These last two lines have only seven and eight syllables: but they each have their four stresses, as clearly as the first two with their eleven syllables, and they therefore give the same satisfaction, while they avoid monotony.

For the failure of his readers to understand anything so easy as this, Coleridge is himself partly to blame. Clearly as he had stated his new principle in the Preface, before he had gone far with "Christabel" he had forgotten it altogether and was writing such lines as these:

"From her kennel beneath the rock  
Maketh answer to the clock."

which, if read naturally, have only three stresses each: to make them into four-stressed lines you must give a conventional stress to the words "from" and "to;" and there is your whole system destroyed at once, for it is the stresses which ought to make the line, not the line to cause the stresses. So Coleridge's attempt failed through his own inconsistency: but the idea survived, and anyone who will may see the working of it in such poems as Shelley's "Away! the moor is dark beneath the moon," Moore's "At the mid hour of night when stars are weeping, I fly" and Matthew Arnold's "Strayed Reveller" and "Rugby Chapel." But the first poet to use this principle with full command, to shew that a prosody based on it may give range as well as power to the poetic instrument, is

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Mr. Robert Bridges. Read first, for the expression of a picturesque fancy, the poem called "A Passer-by:"—

"Whither, O splendid ship, thy white sails crowding,  
Leaning across the bosom of the urgent West,  
That fearest nor sea rising, nor sky clouding,  
Whither away, fair rover, and what thy quest?  
Ah! soon, when Winter has all our vales oppress,  
When skies are cold and misty, and hail is hurling,  
Wilt thou glide on the blue Pacific, or rest  
In a summer haven asleep, thy white sails furling."

For reflection and pathos, that "On a Dead Child,"

"Perfect little body, without fault or stain on thee,  
With promise of strength and manhood full and fair!  
Though cold and stark and bare,  
The bloom and the charm of life doth awhile remain on thee.  
To me, as I move thee now in the last duty,  
Dost thou with a turn or gesture anon respond;  
Startling my fancy fond  
With a chance attitude of the head, a freak of beauty."

For realistic description that called "London Snow":

"When men were all asleep the snow came flying  
In large white flakes falling on the city brown;  
Stealthily and perpetually settling and loosely lying,  
Hushing the latest traffic of the drowsy town:  
Deadening, muffling, stifling its murmurs falling;  
Lazily and incessantly floating down and down:  
Silently sifting and veiling road, roof and railing;  
Hiding difference, making unevenness even,  
Into angles and crevices softly drifting and sailing."

Lastly, for dramatic humour read the verse into which this poet has transposed Terence, in his play called "The Feast of Bacchus": the speech of one Roman old gentleman to another:—

"What in Heaven's name  
Can be your object? What do you drive at? To guess your age  
You are sixty years at least. There's no one hereabouts  
Can show a better farm, nor more servants upon it:  
And yet you do the work yourself, as though you had none.  
Never do I go out, however early in the morning,  
Never come home again, however late at night,  
But here I see you digging, hoeing, or at all events  
Toiling at something or other. You are never a moment idle."

It will be seen at once that in these poems there is not only new beauty of content, but the sound of a new instrument for expressing it. There are lines here which are not merely fresh in their rhythm, but which could not, so long as the words keep their natural accentuation, exist at all in any other kind of English metre known to us.

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Is this a merely technical excellence? Have I after all been attempting to give a lesson in craftsmanship? No; both rhyme and metre are in one aspect technical powers, and many things are revealed to those who think long about them, or attempt to use them, but I have kept as clear as possible of these mysteries. The art of poetry must be left to the poets: but I have tried to deal in outline with the science of it, in order to obtain a better hearing for their music. If the audience are misinformed as to the very scale in which it is written, there must be disappointment on both sides. There has long been much misunderstanding about metre, caused partly by conservative prejudice, partly by a fear that the recognition of new methods must involve a depreciation of long inherited treasures, a tarnishing of long honoured names. This is the reverse of the truth: to believe that resemblance to great predecessors, or conformity to past standards, is the test of excellence—that would be the really sweeping condemnation of all that is greatest in the work of our older poets, for their glory is that they spoke for their own souls and everyone with his own voice. If I desire that English poetry should be once more reconsidered and revalued, it is in order that this may appear more clearly and that we may learn to judge of living poets by the same principle, instead of demanding from them an unchanging orthodoxy which their poetical ancestors all consciously or unconsciously repudiated.

What, then, I am asking when I attempt to lay bare for a moment the nature and history of poetic rhythm, is this. I am asking for the recognition of two principles, and the constant application of them in judging poetry old or new. First, that poetic rhythm is not an applied ornament, nor the result of a mechanical process, nor the fit subject of a pedantic criticism. It is, on the contrary, part of the poet's means of expression, and an aid to the communication between spirit and spirit: its quality is of a subjective nature, and should be studied mainly from a subjective point of view. We may, if we please, try to separate and examine its components, but we must not expect to find our analysis exhaustive, or attempt to found authoritarian doctrine upon it.

The second principle will be that since poetry is a personal expression, and the essence of personality is distinction, the natural tendency of poetic rhythm will be

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towards perpetual change. It is strange that any opinion, any feeling, however conservative, should fight against this, for it means that while we keep all that the past has given, what we shall receive from the future will be new gifts instead of copies of old ones. And, whether welcome or unwelcome, the historical fact is beyond dispute that our poetry has shewn a long continued development of rhythm, and always the effort has been towards greater freedom, to be used for more complete and natural self-expression. In the present age as in the past, this effort is being made, but it is being made now with unexampled vigour and intelligence. We are witnessing the natural recovery from a period of deadness. Mr. Gosse once said that Tennyson's power may be estimated by the fact that "he was able to hold English poetry stationary for sixty years." If that is true, and there certainly is truth in it, it suggests that we are wise in no longer setting our best poets up on pedestals. Hypnotism is not inspiration. What poet has to learn from poet is not a trick of the hand, or a set of cadences, or a formula, or an orthodox tradition, it is a passion for sincerity. To one observer at least our poets seem to have recovered that passion. They have determined to be no longer unnecessarily hindered by old conventions of diction, of "scanning," of unnatural stress and ungrammatical inversion: they are bent on getting nearer to the inward melody, on moving more faithfully to the inward rhythm. In this determination I see no lawlessness, no "aischrolatreia," no cult of the ugly or the eccentric. I see and I desire others to see in it the old and true instinct of the English poets, the belief that formal beauty is begotten, not of the hand of the artist, but of the spirit.

# Lord Haldane and the Lorelei.

By Austin Harrison

Die schönste Jungfrau sitzt  
Dort oben wunderbar,  
Ihr goldenes Geschmeide blitzet.  
Sie kämmt ihr goldenes Haar.  
Sie kämmt es mit goldenem Kamme,  
Und singt ein Lied dabei;  
Das hat eine wundersame,  
Gewaltige Melodei.  
Den Schiffer in kleinem Schiffe  
Ergreift es mit wildem Weh;  
Er schaut nicht die Felsenriffe,  
Er schaut nur hinauf in die Höh'.  
Ich glaube, die Wellen verschlingen  
Am Ende Schiffer und Kahn;  
Und das hat mit ihren Singen  
Die Lorelei gethan.

ALL travellers to Germany have heard tell of the Lorelei, the beautiful Siren of the Rhine, who "sits and combs her golden hair" and lures the sailor to his doom; indeed, Lord Haldane must have passed close to her the other day on his way to Berlin, and quite possibly, seeing that our War Lord is a German scholar, he read Heine's sonnet for the occasion and drew the needful inspiration. Tis to be hoped so, for she is a great lady in her own country and her voice is full of guile, but as it is especially to sailors that she proves dangerous we, who are dependent on these men and their boats for our national existence and continuity, will do well to remember her too.

Lord Haldane did the right thing when he went to Berlin, and all wise men must congratulate him. It has often been said that a few sensible business men, English and German, could settle the whole pother of Anglo-German relations in a week, each party placing the aims and ambitions of their respective countries frankly on the table; and really, since war between the two peoples presents so difficult a problem offensively—for we have no Army and the German Navy would inevitably be annihilated in shock with ours—and there is admittedly no *casus belli* between us, it would seem as if an honest talk ought to achieve what conventional diplomacy never would and still less

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public opinion which, in both nations, tends to drift further apart to the point even of exasperation. That our indefatigable War Lord journeyed to Berlin to test the matter for himself is, therefore, the subject for common satisfaction: we, on our part, because, like true Englishmen, we "took the bull by the horns"; the Germans because it may serve to convince them how utterly they misunderstand English policy and methods, and how immeasurably pleasanter it would be to establish good relations with a people whose last idea in the world it is either to attack Germany or interfere in any way with the legitimate aspirations of the Teutonic race.

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On paper, then, there is an excellent case for agreement, as, on principle, we may assume that both parties desire it. We have nothing to avenge, no strip of land to reconquer; no historical, military or political rancour divides us from the Germans; we may say frankly and with perfect truth that we do not covet a thatch or a blade of grass in the entire Hohenzollern-Hapsburg Empire, in short that Germany has nothing to give us, nothing to exchange, nothing even to barter with, so completely are we innocent of any covetous or aggressive design upon her, so politically self-sufficient are we in our own possessions and opportunities. That fact is a good deal to start with, and if the Germans could only be got to grasp it, much already would have been accomplished. Unfortunately there is the other side.

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To understand the German case, we must try to plumb the Prussian soul. It is perfectly easy if only we realise that the German people are, imperially, practically a new-born people, just as the Japanese became a new race after their heroic struggle with All the Russias. Since the war of '70 everything has prospered in Germany; people have got rich; the character of Germans has changed; they see that Germany is the greatest power on the continent, but the one thing they have not acquired is land, and the one force which stops them from obtaining it, they think, is England. And ever since Bismarck left, the whole German nation, tutored by the Crown and the teaching of Treitschke, has suffered from the malaise of discontent. The morphology of State and Empire is new; the Germans have deliberately cultivated a new outlook, a new art, a new mental altitude (*Haltung*), and Berlin has been imperially turned into the

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gayest city in Europe. Everything has been sudden, restless, jerky, *plötzlich* they call it, and consequently ill-considered, *e.g.*, the design of the Kiel Canal for 13,000-ton ships. There has been too much *Deutschtum* and exhilaration. The Emperor started his Hohenzollern speech policy, his telegram policy, his Barbarossa cult of an "intense Germany," his Navy programme, his *Kaiser-idea* government, his mailed-fist pronouncements, so that the whole country seethed with ambitious tendencies and determinations, backed up by the Pan-Germanic doctrine of an "All-Germany," and by the appreciable growth of a strong Navy in place of the last one Prussia had possessed, which went under the hammer.

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No interest of ours, of course; nor can any purpose be served by recapitulating the jolts and jars administered to European diplomacy in the epoch dating from the Krüger telegram to the last fiasco at Agadir and the Tripolitan-Italian War. Germany, let it be said euphemistically, has been in process of being, "*Im Werden*," as the Germans say; but to understand it we must remember that all this time Michael has been told by Pan-German agitators and politicians that he has been very badly treated indeed, for that all Germany wanted was expansion and the recognition of her "rights" ("spheres of interest," they are sometimes called) by England, and that all she got was refusal. The Boer war brought Anglophobia to its zenith, but it also brought Germany to reason. When, at his height, Prince Bülow repudiated Mr. Chamberlain's offer of friendship, Germany committed the greatest mistake she ever made since the foundation of the Empire, for the result was the *entente* with France, and the fact that now we have absolutely no business to transact with her other than the human interest in the establishment of friendly relations, such as we possess with other nations whose good friends we are.

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The case, therefore, with Germany is discontent, and that, of course, is always a serious matter. What all Germany feels is that we hedge her in, baulk and thwart her, that everywhere she turns England bars the way, that whenever she casts wolf's eyes on this or that colony, desirable territory or oasis, we, with our bulldog Navy, stand across her way with ships all cleared for action, that, in short,

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England is the true foe of German emancipation. That is why the Emperor built the German Navy, why it has grown until it is already the second most powerful in Europe, why it is still rising "in order successfully to face the aggression of any single Navy in the world."

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Discontent is capable of adjustment, but adjustment is not necessarily a solution; and that is the difficulty. The time has come unquestionably for England loyally to seek a settlement of the German question, and Lord Haldane's advances should receive the support of his countrymen without stint or recrimination. On the question of the Bagdad Railway, the cession of the Portuguese possessions there should be now no serious obstacle. Our policy of cramp is a mistake, a mistake negatively, as it is a perpetual source of irritation to the German people, and the more decentralised the German area of Naval defence grows, the more vulnerable in time of war it must be. Once let Germany see that we do not wish to check her, that our policy is not that of the "dog in the manger," and an arrangement should easily enough be arrived at, can unquestionably be arrived at. On this matter, now that negotiations are actually proceeding, it will be well to say nothing more. The principle governing our policy should be that it can be done and therefore that it must be done.

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One great factor in the issue is the slow democratisation of the German people. The Emperor's *régime* of "personal rule" is approaching nearer and nearer to its trial, as has symptomatically been proved by the recent Reichstag elections. Deep as the enmity of the German people is towards us—and never have Germans felt so nationally hostile towards England—the immense power to-day of Social Democracy is a tower of common sense in the situation. Gradually, very gradually it is true, the Germans are trending towards the political freedom of constitutional government. These men stand for peace and social reform. It is a force growing subterraneously, as it were, difficult to estimate, yet unquestionably of immense potential strength and character. Slowly but unmistakably the Socialists are forcing themselves into the places of office, as the election of the son of Liebknecht (founder of the modern Socialist party) in Potsdam, which is the Windsor of Berlin, showed conclusively. On armaments, on the foreign policy of the

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Empire, the party have slight influence it is true; but their presence is a fact and an omen.

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The trouble, from our point of view, is that German public opinion on foreign affairs is still unrepresentative, for opinion is still a party matter controlled from the little press room in the German Foreign Office. The great Catholic Centre Party votes blindly Catholic; the other "parties of order" (as they are called) almost invariably in sequacious deference to the Ministry; only the Socialists have a clear foreign policy, and they are automatically opposed by the Bourgeoisie on grounds of class hostility. The German newspapers keep few correspondents in England, and may be said to be entirely under the thumb of the Wilhelmstrasse. The public, therefore, never has a chance of hearing the case, for everything is estimated and judged on party lines, nor can it be said that the seat of press information it is any sense friendly disposed towards England.

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The Wilhelmstrasse is wooden in its methods, like all bureaucratic institutions. If the Navy League wants more ships the press is used semi-officially, almost invariably in an anti-English spirit, to stir up the necessary patriotic feeling, and the public, in the absence of all other sources of information, is thus led by the nose, each little item adding to the general conception about England's "hostile policy," until the whole Fatherland is ready to bear the burden of more ships and bigger ships to ward off the common enemy of Empire. We do not realise in England that at this moment every man and woman in Germany believes that we were on the verge of attacking Germany last summer, whereas the real truth is that we "got the funks" and had something of a naval panic, thinking that Germany was about to attack us.

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Absurd as it is, that is the situation. Even German Socialists believed the bogus tale about our naval invasion. The spy hysteria is only another sign of their nervousness and unrest. The state of mind of the average German towards England to-day is almost inconceivable. He talks about us as if we had torn his country in two, decimated Bavaria, sacked Hamburg, carried off "Father" Rhine himself. Talking to authoritative members of the Foreign

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Office in Germany, the Englishman must needs ask himself, "What is the German Embassy in London doing?" that so much misrepresentation, ludicrous alarm and falsity are possible. There are thousands of Germans living happily in London alone. They all know England never dreams of attacking Germany. How is it that brilliant generals, admirals, and Reichssekretären of the German Government entertain these strange notions about our policy? German merchants come and go by the ten thousand every year. How is it these men do not enlighten their compatriots about England's natural wish to be friends with Germany? How is it possible that these perpetual "war scares" arise in Germany?

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The answer is simple. It is this want of individual public opinion in Germany, this fatal subserviency of the entire German press to "semi-official" control and machination. Each man being judged from the party standpoint, there are no what we would call "public men" in Germany, no Roseberys, Curzons, Lloyd Georges, to make great national speeches or write letters to *The Times* or elsewhere, because each man in Germany is tarred with the brush of party. Bebel has often told the Reichstag that this German distrust of England is foolish; but the Reichstag only laughs because Bebel is a Socialist. The Catholic in Bavaria is always complaining of the big Navy bill, but the centre party invariably votes for the ships, because Admiral Tirpitz, who is a fine fellow with a big black beard, tells the Party leader that Germany needs more ships to defend herself against England. And so on, and every time the Kaiser visits England the German Navy is increased.

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These are the real imponderabilia which Lord Haldane has to meet. The German people are soaked with distrust of our policy. Spurred on by natural ambition and the uncomfortable realisation that the German Empire was consolidated too late to get full benefit out of the African spoliation, they rushed into China, into Morocco, into Asia Minor, anywhere and everywhere, feeling that something had to be done, that they must make their existence felt, that in every deal that took place they ought to have a voice, that, in short, time had to be made up, and behind it all the goad of the great taskmaster thundered "might is right"—the reason of policy is force.

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It was this construction of the ethics of diplomacy that caused the German war panic when the admirable Mr. Campbell Bannerman sounded Germany on the question of disarmament. Instead of realising that no man ever had better intentions than the late Liberal Prime Minister, the German Government thought it was an ultimatum." "The Campbells are coming," they sang on every battleship in the Baltic. "*Donnerwetter noch einmal!*"—much to Mr. Bannerman's astonishment, who, like most Liberal Ministers at that time, was as profoundly ignorant of Germany as the Germans were of us when they thought last summer that the war dance of the "Die-Hards" would inevitably lead to social revolution. This is what in Germany is called the "personal moment." Apparently the German Embassy in London was entirely ignorant of Mr. Bannerman's docile nature, just as Mr. Bannerman, in sounding Germany, displayed his entire ignorance of the psychology of the German nation. And the fact is important. In the psychology of the two peoples lies in great part the solution of the German *rapprochement*.

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It is as well to be quite frank about this matter, for if we are ever to be friends with the Germans—friends politically, that is—we shall have to take into account, first, the quite natural sensibility of a nation conscious of a great future, chafing under a perfectly intelligible sense of late-coming in the world; and, secondly, how far the legitimate aspirations of the one harmonise with the legitimate securities of the other, seeing that ambition and possession are not the same thing, either in *esse* or in *posse*. Politically, Lord Haldane should be able to meet German requirements satisfactorily enough. He should be able to convince Germans that England harbours no offensive design upon them; that our policy, being solely dictated by reasons of defence, has no cause to change into one of offence. He should be able to let Germans know that we are not opposed to her expansion, that we have no desire to bar her progress in the world, that if she chooses to buy the Portuguese colonies, we, at any rate, will not deter her. All that is reasonable enough, and would without doubt sensibly relieve the psychological side of the problem, which contains all the latent madness that makes for war.

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To take one example—the attitude of English Liberals

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towards the Navy until with their advent to power they had to look upon the matter responsibly. A few years ago our present Ministers spoke of the German Navy as if it presented no danger to England at all, and the Germans, failing to understand our Party system, reckoned that they would "let down" our Navy in their zealous enthusiasm for Manchester economics and national retrenchment. Hence their recent Dreadnought policy. The surprise of Germany has been vast. Sir E. Grey's speech acted like a bomb; Mr. Winston Churchill's too. The change seemed to Germans to be ominous, almost threatening. They do not understand that our Ministers play the game of Party politics. If even Mr. Lloyd George talks about big ships, then indeed England must be hostile. We, *per contra*, say the same thing when the invariable results of the Kaiser's receptions in England are fresh accelerations of German battleships. And, of course, it is a game, and a very expensive one too. But for the supposed Liberal attitude towards the building of ships it may well be questioned whether the Germans would ever have embarked on the feverish race of competition which, in reality, is the vital cause of friction between the two great peoples.

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Is that, however, the final solution? Here we would remind Lord Haldane of the song of the Lorelei. Most certainly it is not. The English side of the question is *solely the growth of the German Navy*.

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It is true that Mr. Winston Churchill made a fine speech when Lord Haldane was in Berlin on this subject of our Naval defence; but we cannot trust our Party politicians, nor must we forget that this same Minister only three years ago publicly stated that he did not consider that Germany was building up to our Navy. The whole question for England is this of the Navy. No political arrangement with Germany, no *entente*, no pact, can alter anything here. Our goodwill, by all means, let Germany have it. Let us have whatever arrangement we can obtain. Let us be friends. But so long as the German Navy grows, so proportionately must ours grow. The Navy that Germany is building is for a future eventuality. We must take keel by keel mechanically, two for every German capital ship, now and always, no matter what it costs us or on what friendly

## LORD HALDANE AND THE LORELEI

terms we may henceforth stand with her ; that must be the condition of any political agreement. It is hardly to be expected that Germany will modify her Naval programme, or even consent to discuss it. Good, then our agreement, if agreement there is, must be one of sentiment, *pour le bon motif*. In time she may come to reason the matter out for herself; that, however, is her affair. The Germans, we must bear in mind, are perfectly within their rights to regard an enormous Navy as a necessity, and if they do we must bear with them. To us it is our all in all. The whole national idea stands or falls with our ships. England and her Naval supremacy are one.

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From the point of view of the British taxpayer the prospect of an Anglo-German Entente can matter not at all *unless* it carries with it some kind of an understanding regarding the building of ships, when at once an entirely new situation would be created. But it is very important that Germans should grasp the point. Mr. Churchill spoke of the German Navy as in a sense a "luxury;" but that is not the case because it is being built as a weapon to challenge our power. Now Fritz's giant guards were a luxury because they, poor fellows, were not much use as fighting men, being too tall for their boots, and not a few of of them being Irishmen who were very fond of the bottle. These giant pipeclay chaps were luxuries; but not so the rising German Navy, which is the most deliberate and consciously military organisation at this moment in Europe, as the weapon with which to create a destiny.

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It is always the Press which gets the blame when nations are estranged, yet it is notorious how ignorant our Ministers are of foreign peoples and languages, and still more is that the case with the Wilhelmstrasse. It is to the patriotism and prescience of English journalists that England owes her lead in ships—to the policy of the *Times*, to men differing widely in other matters, yet one on this vital question to the island; men such as E. J. Dillon, Garvin, the late Blennerhasset, Maxse, Wilson, etc., and very particularly to the English correspondents in Berlin in the decade 1896-1906, at one time in opposition to our own Foreign Office, which not so long ago was grievously ignorant of the German aim. Mr. Chamberlain was as ignorant about Germany in 1898 as was our present Naval

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Minister in the year 1909. When Sir Edward Grey talks about the journalists he should try to understand that his speech on Foreign Affairs a few months ago did more to offend Germany than anything that has been said in England for two years.

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But we have one Minister who understands German and Germany, and so we hope and believe that success will crown Lord Haldane's initiative. Every sane man in England would welcome a *détente* in a condition of friction which is both absurd and dangerous. If we have an *entente* it must be—without prejudice. That is to say, no matter if we present Germany with Walfisch Bay, tell her to go "right ahead" with her Anatolian Railway, and encourage her to buy the whole of Portugal's non-whiteman's dependencies, and there is great rejoicing "Unter den Linden," the question of the number of ships that we build remains unaltered. The equation of our naval strength must be governed by the strength of Germany's. If Germany, with or without an understanding, increases her Dreadnought ships to three a year, we must have six. It may be doubted whether the prospect will conduce to the taxpayer's happiness, but there it is, and no fine words or promises, not even the blandishments of the Lorelei, can affect our Navy by so much as the economy of a torpedo.

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"I think (Heine says) the waves swallowed down the sailor and his boat, and that is what the Lorelei did with her song." If Germany wants a true Alliance, let her come to terms with us about ships. Otherwise it will be an agreement of mere form and comity, and we shall have to go on quietly building ships—two to Germany's every one.  
A. H.

# The Brains Behind the Labour Revolt

By Rowland Kenney

BEFORE we can get any clear idea of the forces behind the wave of industrial unrest which is surging over the country, it will be necessary to deal with the general labour situation during the past few years.

Just over twenty years ago the trade unionists wrenched substantial concessions from the employers. The Miners' Federation won as much as forty per cent. increase of wages for their members; the historic sixpence per hour, with eightpence per hour overtime, was fought for and gained by the dockers, and London coal porters' wages rose from twenty-four to thirty-two shillings per week. These successes gave a tremendous impetus to trade union activity, but their natural consequence was that the employers began to bestir themselves. The idea of combination for the cheapening of production and increased profits was extended to the equally pressing necessity of preparing for industrial strife, and so successfully developed, that before long they were in a position not only to resist the demands of the unions but also to enforce their own claims for reductions of wages or readjustments of existing conditions of labour.

Meanwhile the Social Democrats vigorously preached the class war and effectively spread the ideas of social revolution among the extreme section of the workers. Mr. Robert Blatchford put life and light into the dismal science of Economics and showed that it could be made intelligible to any man of ordinary common-sense. The Fabian Society busily manufactured Socialist ammunition and the I.L.P. (Independent Labour Party) propaganda of practical politics reached large working class audiences. The trade unionists, although they had still money and numerical strength, were handicapped by their craft system of organisation—every petty little section of men had a separate union—and gradually became helpless in the hands of the employers with

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their district or national federations embracing the whole of particular industries. The trade union masters beat the men at their own game.

Then came the political move.

The Taff Vale judgment in 1901 laid down the law that a trade union, as such, could be sued for the misdemeanours of its individual officers, and practically rendered peaceful picketing and persuasion illegal acts punishable by law. The Socialists united in demonstrating the futility of trying to raise wages or reduce hours of labour by sectional strikes, and their persistent agitation for political action added to the resentment against the Taff Vale judgment led to the Socialist-Trade Union alliance and the triumphant entry of a party of thirty direct and independent representatives of labour into the 1906 Parliament.

Numerous forces were at work to give political expression to labour aims, but the organisation which made a definite independent political labour party possible at that time was the I.L.P. It was formed at Bradford in 1893 and two years later its members were so well satisfied with the progress it was making that they put twenty-eight parliamentary candidates in the field, all of whom, except one (Mr. Keir Hardie) were beaten. For the next ten years it grew steadily. Scores of earnest men and women spoke for and worked in its branches, but the man who did most to make it into a strong militant organisation, capable of pushing the trade unions into independent political action, was Mr. Philip Snowden. His striking personality, his obvious sincerity, the line he always took in his effective, if somewhat bitter, propagandist speeches led thousands into the movement. Many of the speakers did more to befog Socialist ideas than to explain them: A few general condemnations of competitive industry, a cursing of tyrannical plutocrats, an emotional peroration—and that was all.

Mr. Snowden did more than that. Seeing that the chief difficulty in getting the workers to accept Socialist principles or independent labour ideas lay in their allegiance to Liberalism, he specialised on Liberalism and Liberals and attacked them with all the startling bitterness and invective of which he is so capable. I know many Trade Unionists who spent scores of hours listening to Socialist speakers and left their meetings convinced that, except for the noise they made, there was no essential difference between them and the Liberals; but after hearing a Snowden speech they

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could no longer mistake the line of demarcation, and according to their temperament, they joined the I.L.P. or became more confirmed adherents to the Liberal faith.

Then the Parliamentary machine gripped the Labour men and in a year or so ground out their fire. It is easy to understand the quick taming of the ordinary Labour M.P.'s. They had fought strenuously in the old days of trade union persecution when there was but a faint hope of getting a party of their own to Westminster. The realisation of that hope left them bankrupt of ideals. Having attained to the greatest height of their wildest ambitions they were overwhelmed by success and fell impotent before the enormous task confronting them. It was not a case of treachery to labour or an awakening to a new faith, it was simply incompetence and an inability to adapt themselves to the new conditions. And no one was much surprised. But the gradual development of the politician's customary equivocation by the advanced section led to complaints from the rank and file.

The Socialist malcontents were the worst. They had accepted the alliance with the Trade Unionists believing that in a short time the whole trade union movement would be permeated with Socialism, and they were woefully disappointed. The Socialist M.P.'s were charged with displaying an unwholesome disposition to have their pace regulated by the slowest and most reactionary section of the party instead of dragging the laggards more rapidly along. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, then Chairman of the I.L.P. and Secretary of the Labour Party, was accused of playing a double game, and the rebels were wild in their denunciations of him and his particular followers,—which was absurd.

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald is one of the most misunderstood men in the Labour movement. He was—and is—the biggest intellectual force of his party, but his intellect is of a peculiar quality. He is too abstruse, too academic, for plain men. Labour audiences delight in his speeches, with their long periods and worked-up revolutionary fervour; they think such cleverness good value for their money, but they leave his meetings wondering what it all meant, and often with a strong suspicion that it meant "nowt." His books and pamphlets are too wordy and obscure and are little read by the rank and file. Only a small minority trust him; the rest suspect every move he makes. Having a sincere desire to help the workers, but an emphatic belief that they are incapable of doing anything good for themselves, he has

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developed a distrust of democracy ; knowing a little of his struggles I do not wonder at it, but that does not alter the fact. He never gets home to the workers ; he cannot feel with them. His Scotch Nonconformity does not allow him to understand the temperament of the majority of working men. They sense him as being of a different class and a different type, and, while honestly admiring, suspect his cleverness, with the result that he never has the luck to find his finger on the pulse of labour. The truth of the matter is that with him revolutionary Socialism is an unconscious pose. Intellectually he has grasped the Socialist position, but at heart he is a collectivist Liberal, and no one could justly blame him if he joined the Liberal Party. But after all, his qualities, which they neither understand nor believe to be of the kind required, force the Labour men to leave the party practically in his hands.

The dissatisfaction was not confined to Mr. MacDonald, for the mark of the House became apparent on all the Labour M.P.'s. They gradually drifted into the *game* of politics. From Socialist propagandists and trade union officials they became amateur statesmen, regarding the Labour units as pawns on the political chess-board, just as many of the members of the other parties regard their constituents as steps to Government positions.

The trade union rank and file, having been persuaded that industrial action was played out, neglected that phase of trade unionism and looked to their political leaders to settle all difficulties by Parliamentary machinery. The inevitable result was bewildering disappointment.

If the Party had been successful as parties go, it could not have satisfied all its supporters—for they were in a hurry and Parliament is not. Indeed, political action, either in or out of Parliament, is generally a speculation in futures. A housing law, a land law and a child-feeding bill may be passed, but it is very improbable that a labourer earning twenty shillings a week will appreciate their potential social utility at its real value. A small minority may work hard for months for some measure, which, if passed, would in course of time be of incalculable benefit to Labour, but the tangible advantages of which cannot by any means filter through to the workers for years. The artisan who is barely making a living wage is more concerned about an increase of a shilling per week on his wages than the momentous question of the Lords' Veto or even an Insurance Bill. Out-o'-work, who has

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listened to a generation of agitators fulminating against the system of society which allows unemployment to exist, expects the agitators to make some strong and persistent efforts to deal with the evil when they get to Westminster. He does not understand the difficulties; he is not concerned with them. The agitator said "Send me to St. Stephen's and I'll settle the matter," perfectly confident that he was capable of doing so. But he achieved nothing. He did not try very hard, and it is doubtful whether his best efforts would have met with any measure of success; but they would have kept for him the confidence of the men who paid his wages.

To the ordinary worker who pays pence to his trade union the question of unemployment is an illustration of the egregious failure of the Labour Party, for, after six years in Parliament, its Right to Work Bill seems to have been mislaid or entirely forgotten. The inertia of the Labour men with regard to this question has had infinitely more to do with their unpopularity than they imagine. For a long time the only militant displays of the working classes were made by the unemployed. Processions marched through the streets of the industrial centres, occasionally coming into contact with the police and ending the demonstration by landing their leader in jail. And the only sign they got from Parliament was the outburst by Mr. Victor Grayson in October, 1908, with the consequent wranglings between the Graysonians and the Labour Party.

Some time ago Mr. Snowden reported Mr. Keir Hardie as saying that the Labour Party had ceased to count, and added: "It has gone beyond that, and its professed independence has become an object for the sneers and contempt of all parties in the House of Commons." The demoralising effects of the Party's impotence had for long been apparent, and this admission was a final blow to many supporters who had stuck to it in spite of all evidence.

The real force of the Party, its energy, zeal and fighting spirit, came from the I.L.P., and the unhappy condition of affairs in that organisation during the past three or four years is a good indication as to the ill-health of the larger movement. Since Mr. Grayson's display in the House there have been a number of interesting developments. Owing to the damaging attacks of that section which was dissatisfied with their political policy, four of the founders of the I.L.P.—Messrs. MacDonald, Snowden, Hardie and Glasier—resigned

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their positions on the National Council at the Easter Conference in 1909. In July, 1910, their successors raised further trouble by issuing a manifesto protesting against the revisionist tactics of the Labour Party. In the general propaganda work the speakers found their time fully occupied in defending the politicians' sins of omission and commission instead of preaching Socialism, and the more ardent spirits among them chafed under the strain. Old campaigners who had fought constituencies in the interests of Labour openly attacked their old colleagues. The weekly organ of the movement occupied the difficult position of alternately damning the grumblers and gently chiding those grumbled about, until it ultimately—and wisely—adopted the attitude that the Party was all right except that the trade union section occasionally needed a little hustling.

And all the time the working classes grew more and more discontented. Wages showed no tendency to rise and living became dearer. They were surfeited with politics, utterly distrustful of politicians and all agog for any methods of attack on the employers. Conciliation, arbitration and compromise had been given a trial, working agreements made between the trade union leaders and the masters, and still the men could see no tangible benefits either from their political or industrial efforts, and there was a cry for the old appeal of force. The political leaders were entirely discredited; they were out of touch with the real feeling of Labour and had nothing whatever to do with the revolt. The determination and grit shown by the various bodies of strikers surprised and incensed them.

The Tyneside boilermakers were the first to make a set against the drift. The masters had dictated terms of peace which the men's leaders were about to accept, but the men themselves, regardless of the apparent hopelessness of the position, threw over the leaders, pursued their own course and won the fight—and were lectured by Mr. Snowden on their sinful trend in the direction of Anarchy! In the autumn of the same year, 1910, twelve thousand miners employed by the Cambrian combine struck work and showed an absolute contempt for all efforts to "arrange" matters. This fight was carried out with a stubbornness unsurpassed in industrial disputes and cost five million pounds in the ten months during which it raged. At the same time an agitation was proceeding among the seamen conducted by Mr. Havelock Wilson, Secretary of the Sea-

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men's Union, and behind him, advising, guiding, teaching—in fact almost controlling, was the figure of a woman.

Madame Sorgue, or just "Sorgue" as she is more familiarly known, is a Russian-French aristocrat, whose record as agitator, orator, strike leader and journalist is known and wondered at throughout the continent of Europe. Her career began on the "Journal des Débats" and her next post was as collaborator with Millerand and Viviani when those fickle apostles of Socialism were running "La Petite République." In 1896 she attended the International Socialist Congress in London in company with Louise Michel, the Red Virgin of the Commune, and struck up a friendship with Mr. Tom Mann and Mr. Ben Tillett. Her subsequent experiences of the persistent way in which French Socialists "ratted" when they won a way into the Chamber of Deputies led her to throw over the Parliamentarians and it was as a Syndicalist that she came to England to help organise the seamen. She made scores of speeches at the principal seaports and the ready acceptance of the principles of direct action as an immediate weapon had a great influence on subsequent developments.

Mr. Tom Mann, that stormy petrel of labour, landed in England after fourteen years at the Antipodes and, having shed his old I.L.P. and Social Democrat theories, sprang into the arena as an apostle of direct action. Mr. Ben Tillett had lain low for long but was again on the war path.

At the Whitsun Conference of the Seamen's and Firemen's Union the agitation had progressed so far that it was decided to call for a conciliation board to give the employers an opportunity of averting an international strike. The Shipping Federation ridiculed the idea. The men's reply to the ridicule was the general strike of June 14, and in three days the increased rates demanded had been granted on one hundred and fifty vessels. The middle of July saw the end of the seamen's strike in favour of the men and the beginning of the dockers' strike, in addition to a number of small outbreaks such as the carters in Manchester, platers and rivetters at Hebburn-on-Tyne and the miners of Pendleton in Lancashire. By the end of the month thirty thousand London dockers had struck. A number of men were locked out at the Lancashire and Yorkshire railway works at Horwich, and the rest, both union and non-union men, left the works in consequence. The Clyde shipwrights and engineers demanded an increase in wages. Engineers' labourers in

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Manchester struck for a minimum wage of a pound a week. The Shipping Federation issued a circular stating that preference would be given to men recruited by the Federation, and the Hull Strike Committee threatened another strike if it was not withdrawn. South London factory girls struck for—they knew not what. London and Glasgow tramway men threatened to come out. Under the leadership of Mr. Ben Tillett the London transport workers were astonishing the country by their determined fight. Not one section of the hundred thousand men involved would return to work until all of them had been satisfied. The metropolis awoke to the fact that its supply of foodstuffs largely depended on the grimy riverside workers. To get ice and necessary medicaments for hospitals and milk for babies, the authorities had to apply to Tillett and the rest of the leaders for permits for the men to handle those goods. Meanwhile Liverpool was in a frenzy; there was rioting, charges by the police and military, and on Monday, August 14, when the Liverpool shipowners announced the lock-out, the offices of the Shipping Federation were burned down.

The seamen's and the dockers' strikes roused much feeling in the country, but they were entirely eclipsed in the public mind by the two days' general strike on the railways, and it is in reference to the railway trouble that the new force behind the revolt is to be found. There is an ever-increasing number of trade unionists who are spending every available penny and every moment of their leisure time in the acquisition of scientific knowledge, not for mere personal advancement or culture, nor yet for a technical education to make them into more efficient workmen—many of them have got that—but for an education which will give them a scientific knowledge of economic and social evolution and of the various forces at work in modern society, so that they will be more competent to deal with the problem of raising the workers to the position of the controlling class in society.

Twelve years ago the number of workers craving such an education was small, but two sympathetic Americans, Dr. Charles Beard and Mr. Walter Vrooman, evidently considered there were sufficient to justify them in founding the Ruskin College at Oxford. Its object was to take working men who were rebels against society and give them such a training as would enable them methodically and scientifically to help re-fashion the world on a more rational basis. The

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college was run and financed by Mr. Vrooman, with Mr. Dennis Hird, M.A., in charge as Warden, but after a time Mr. Vrooman and Dr. Beard were called away to America, and the college was left to its own resources. Private individuals kept it going for a period, until the trade unions could be persuaded to spend money on scholarships for some of their members and contribute to the college funds. During the course of its twelve years' existence the college has sent five hundred students back to the labour world with some training in the social sciences, and has given tuition by correspondence to over eight thousand others.

Three years ago, however, a number of the more revolutionary students went on strike—refused to attend lectures, and actually appointed lecturers from their own ranks in place of those to whom they took objection. For some time there had been a good deal of discontent with the governing body owing to their continual tamperings with the college methods, so as to bring it into touch with the University, and an organisation, called the Plebs League, was formed by the rebels and a number of old students. The object of the Plebs was to stop the trend of Ruskin towards the University, and to make it into a definite Labour college in closer touch with the growing militant spirit among the trade unionists. They charged the authorities with having put aside the original object and introduced a new spirit, a spirit alien to the best interests of a militant Labour movement. The crisis came when the governing body, in March, 1909, forced the resignation of the principal lecturer, Mr. Dennis Hird, whom they looked on as representing the element of rebellion. The result of this drastic action was the strike and the founding of a new institution, the C.L.C. (Central Labour College).

The difference between the two institutions is that Ruskin College is definitely linked on to the University, has none but University professors, and encourages its students to absorb University ideas by offering University diplomas. Whereas the C.L.C. is bound to turn out agitators and malcontents, for it definitely asserts that to be its aim. Taking men already conversant with labour problems, it gives them a particular kind of training. It makes no pretence of giving a "broad" education, claiming that such an education merely confers special benefits on individuals. Its teaching is frankly partisan. History is not dealt with as a record of the mighty works of a ruling class, but as a record

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of the struggles which have taken place in social groups because of the conflicting interests of the various classes that have from time to time divided society. "Das Kapital" is its text book of Economics. Its key to the interpretation of Sociology is class interest ; dividing the social groups into the owners and the non-owners of property, it points out the common interests of all those who work for wages. The training is not confined to resident students. In the northern industrial centres, in the Welsh mining districts, and among London trade unionists, numerous classes are held under C.L.C. auspices. An army of workers is thus being educated from the point of view that the unity of interests between employers and employed is one of the biggest fallacies ever crammed into their brains. The acceptance of this principle of a definite class antagonism has already had great influence. It absolutely cuts out any idea of conciliation as a final solution of labour problems, and must, eventually, lead to an economic revolution.

One of the first large trade unions to turn over its support from Ruskin to the C.L.C. was the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, and at the present time this union and the South Wales miners are its principal supporters. This is most significant when we reflect on their revolutionary tendencies. During the railway strike last year the chief agitators in the most militant districts were ex-Ruskin students, who are now C.L.C. propagandists. One of them was an organiser in Liverpool. The principal strike advocate in the Chesterfield district, on the Midland, was a college man who, long before the strike occurred, had criticised the 1907 Conciliation Scheme, strongly denouncing the whole policy of conciliation as being a handicap to the workers, and effectively demonstrating to large meetings of railwaymen that, if they do not obtain fair payment for the labour they sell, the best means of raising the price is to withhold it for a time and so starve the market. The present lecturer on Industrial History and Economics at the Labour College was a brakesman on the Barry Railway Company five years ago, and resigned his post in order to avail himself of a two years' course at Ruskin. Both before and since the railway strike he has been in constant demand by railwaymen's branch meetings for lectures on industrial subjects.

Mr. G. W. Brown, of Hull, is an instance of how the young men are taking hold of affairs. Previous to his two

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years' college course he was comparatively unknown outside his own district, but since his return he has acted as chief representative of the men in three disputes with the North-Eastern Railway Company; he was one of the foremost agitators during the general strike; holds official positions on the Hull Trades Council, the A.S.R.S. District Council and the local Labour Party, and is now being run as candidate for the post of general organiser for the A.S.R.S. against Mr. E. Charles, of Pontypool—and has every chance of winning.

These two opponents are fair representatives of two distinct schools of thought. Mr. Charles is a strictly official candidate supporting the conservative policy of the union executive and the old school of leaders. For fifteen years he has held official positions in his district and two years ago was actually president of the Society—just the type of man who would once have simply fallen into the position. On the other hand Mr. Brown is a living embodiment of the new fighting spirit, a strong advocate of the most extreme measures of industrial and political action, winning votes because of his uncompromising attitude and his thorough understanding of the problems with which the men are faced. The election of such a man is bound to have an effect; as the old type of leaders go the fight will become keener. The men are ready. Last year's railway strike would never have happened if the men had not forced it; half of them were out and the rest threatening to come out before the union officials could be persuaded to call a general strike.

The same thing is happening amongst the miners. The men, once so cautious, are now ready for any fighting call. With the exception of a few who are imbued with the new spirit, the leaders are unheeded or condemned and the young men are coming to power. In those storm-centres of unrest, the South Wales coalfields, numbers of college men have been elected to official positions in the trade organisations. Many instances could be given, but the evidence of individuals is dwarfed into insignificance by recent developments. At the last election of South Wales executive members of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, Messrs. Abraham ("Mabon"), Brace and Richards, three of the old type of trade unionists, were supplanted by the revolutionaries, Messrs. Barker, Hartshorn and Stanton, who state that their triumph was largely due to the influence of C.L.C. men on the voters.

The change this makes is exemplified in the present crisis.

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The old officials want compromise, arbitration, the easy course ; " Mabon " especially has been active in condemning the agitation. The new men each plump for a strike to enforce the minimum wage.

Mr. Barker, commenting on the changing conditions, says :

"The trade union leader of the old type is a man with plenty of native shrewdness, but he is illiterate, or reads little except his daily papers ; knows nothing of economics ; is bumptious in his dealings with the workmen ; has no ideals and is rapidly becoming discredited. Among the younger workmen he is a spent force ; in their ranks are many keen students, a goodly number of whom have been to the Labour College and now hold official positions ; their education has worked wonders, they have become fluent speakers and ready debaters and wield enormous influence among their mates."

Mr. Hartshorn has spoken with equal emphasis on the far-reaching influence of the college men in present-day labour contests.

The present manifestation of unity among the organised workers and a general desire for war does not necessarily mean that they have turned down the political tool, however. They have only put it on one side for a time because the workmen they had deputed to handle it were not good enough for the job, and because the weapon of Syndicalism is more suited to their immediate needs. For immediate practical purposes—the raising of wages—the Syndicalist has by far the best of the argument. After six years in Parliament the Labour politicians have an Old Age Pensions Bill, a Workmen's Compensation Act, a Trades Disputes Bill, and a number of minor measures as evidence of their influence on legislation. All excellent things in their way, but none of them directly affecting the spending power of the worker, whereas an appreciable difference in wages can be shown in those industries which have acted on the principles of direct action. The extra money accruing to seamen from the success of the strike last June is computed at one million pounds a year, and, added to the force of a million pound argument, Mr. Havelock Wilson, ex-M.P. for Middlesbrough, is quoted by the Syndicalists as having stated that his eighteen years' work in Parliament was practically wasted. Mr. Tom Mann, who was at the head of the transport workers' struggle in Liverpool,

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claims that in Liverpool alone over thirty thousand dock workers won an increase of wages averaging eight shillings per week each, in addition to numerous concessions referring to the conditions under which the men would work in future. No other town or city in England could be used to such good advantage as Liverpool to indicate the growing consciousness of unity among workmen. Its religious and political sectional hatreds are intense. The dockers are almost entirely Roman Catholic; ninety per cent. of the carters, numbering seven thousand five hundred, are Orangemen; but throughout the seventy-two days that the strike lasted not one discordant note was sounded.

That is one of Mr. Tom Mann's strongest points, the readiness with which discontented wage-earners will now drop political and even religious differences when it can be proved that unity in industrial warfare will put money in their pockets, and therefore, that in advocating Industrial Unionism, he is simply following the line of least resistance. He further points out the uselessness of Parliament, either to help or hinder the men when once the fight has begun and all sections are united, illustrating his case by instancing the fact that during the strike—although seven thousand troops paraded the streets with fixed bayonets, thousands of police were drafted in from London and other towns, and three battleships lay in the Mersey with their guns trained on the docks and streets—there was a fleet of huge Transatlantic liners and one hundred and fifty of the finest merchant ships in the world held up, unable to turn a screw.

In the matter of unemployment, the Syndicalists also score. They say to trade unionists: "Reduce the hours of employment, and there will be employment for all," advising them to organise themselves so effectively that they will be practically in a position to dictate the hours each section of men shall work. They claim that of the ten thousand merchantmen of this country the vast majority are always under-manned. The moderate demand of three more men per boat would thus absorb thirty thousand more seamen. A forty-eight-hour week on the railways would find employment for sixty thousand men. A universal eight-hour day at the docks, and gangs properly made up, and ninety thousand more dockers would be required. Obviously, this is a much more alluring programme to men flushed with recent victory than a Parliamentary Right to Work Bill, which will need a terrible fight to get it through the

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House of Commons, and then cost a large sum of money to administer.

But, as I have already indicated, continental Syndicalism has not been accepted in its entirety. The British trade unionists have never seriously considered the French Syndicalist idea of accomplishing a social revolution—acquiring the industries of the country and running them in their own interest—by the coup of a general strike. They will extend the principles of co-operative or sympathetic industrial action so as to force wages as high and hours of labour as low as possible, but they will certainly not cut out politics entirely from their scheme of operations. With the exception of Mr. Tom Mann, no other labour organiser or agitator whose name is known outside his own immediate circle has declared for non-parliamentarianism. The rest are believers in political action, whilst Mr. James Winstone and Mr. Vernon Hartshorn, two of the most popular strike advocates in South Wales, and Mr. Ben Tillett, the most influential strike leader in the country and a damaging critic of the Labour Party, are all on the Party's list of candidates. The strongest factor in favour of the politicians, however, is the tremendous growth of State Socialist sentiment, fostered as it is by recent Liberal legislation which accepts the doctrine of State responsibility for national evils.

This, then, is the line of future development. The present political representatives of Labour, being out of touch with the real labour movement, will be absorbed by the Liberal Party or gradually weeded out just as the "Mabon" type of leaders are being cleared out of the industrial wing of the Labour army, and their positions filled by younger men with clearer brains and an outlook broad enough to consider the problems and press the claims of their class in both the political and the industrial fields.

The rejuvenation of the party will take time, but it is certain to come, and every militant move on the part of the trade unionists will hasten it. Those Labour M.P.'s who call themselves advanced will no doubt be astute enough to keep their seats in the new chariot, but they will be amazingly uncomfortable. From the present welter of conflicting labour activities will emerge an uncompromising attitude of hostility to capital in the industrial field, and, if not a Socialist Party in name, then the adoption by the Labour Party in Parliament of a definite Socialistic policy.

# Home Rule and the Unionists

By Democritus.

WE hear a good deal of the difficulties of the Liberals in dealing with Home Rule. These, no doubt, are considerable. But the Unionists will have their difficulties too. The question is almost as awkward for them as it is for their rivals, and they have to make up their mind how to face it.

The situation has changed to their disadvantage since 1886 and 1893. In the former year it was plain sailing for Conservatives and Liberal-Unionists. They had only to make themselves the mouthpiece of a genuine popular sentiment against what was regarded as treason and terrorism. That was the honest belief of hundreds of thousands of English and Scottish electors, and there was much to lend colour to it. There was undoubtedly a considerable element of rebellion and sheer hatred to England in the Parnellite demand for Home Rule. It was the legacy which four centuries of mismanagement and misfortune had bequeathed to the depressed and dwindling Ireland of the Victorian period. As she rose from her sleep of exhaustion after the Famine she muttered in a dream of feverish but ineffectual disloyalty. All that was actively insurgent in the Irish race had passed beyond the seas; Ireland was left to welter in sullen but impotent fractiousness, cattle-maiming, Fenianism, the traditions of law-breaking handed down from the Ribbonmen and Whiteboys of the past. Then came Parnell, and crystallised the whole movement into the savage demand for self-government, backed by threat and violence—violence in the House of Commons, violence surging through the towns and breaking bloodstained upon the villages and fields of Ireland, violence expressed in murder, outrage, the barbarous boycott, shooting, torturing of men and beasts, furious attacks upon the police, Irish members defying the might and majesty of the British Constitution, making a mock of our Parliament, insulting the Speaker, cheering the Mahdi. All this was in the mind of Englishmen when Gladstone made his

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compact with the "uncrowned king," who had sworn to snap the "last link" that bound Ireland to her arrogant sister. And Englishmen, the majority of them, answered as Englishmen like to answer when threatened: "See you damned first!" It is always a satisfaction to John Bull, especially to John Bull of the "governing classes," when he can say that with a clear conscience. The Unionist leaders said it for him in 1886, and he was very pleased with them. Orators, brilliant, weighty, passionate—Salisbury, John Bright, Goschen, Chamberlain, Randolph Churchill—just put into crushing words that you-be-damned sentence with which all that was most respectable in England replied to Parnellite machinations, Land League terrorism, and the Celtic fury of the Invincibles. Rebels, it said: we don't make terms with rebels. Even if Home Rule were justifiable, on general grounds, it cannot be granted to men who would squeeze it out of us by force and menace.

A great political movement, be it of advance or reaction, must be inspired by emotion more than reason if it is to do anything. The first Home Rule Bill came before the English nation upon a wave of emotionalism. Unionism was not merely a policy, but a cause, a sentiment, almost a religion, with a vast proportion of the electorate. Multitudes of men, who had been Liberals all their lives, as their fathers and grandfathers had been before them, voted with the Tories, because they thought that the Tories this time stood for loyalty, for freedom of conscience, above all, for resistance against the attempt to bully Englishmen into surrender. So the Unionists had a straight course and a comparatively easy task. They might or might not defeat Gladstonians in argument. But that was secondary. Their main business was to fan into flame the generous anger, the natural indignation, the passionate prejudice of Englishmen against Home Rule and Clericalism, against Separatism and Intolerance, against "Parnellism and Crime."

They succeeded. Gladstone was defeated, and his party split asunder; and the Conservatives took over a large section of the moderate Liberals and entered upon a new and prosperous career as Unionists. The name was symbolic. Henceforth maintenance of the Union became the test of orthodoxy. If the "Unionist" was sound on that point he might be nearly as heretical as he pleased upon most others. Thus the Conservative party was able to

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enfold in its embrace politicians of such varied tint as Joseph Chamberlain, who had been almost a Socialist and very nearly a Republican; John Bright, an old-fashioned Radical of the Radicals, disliking the Church, the Peerage, the landed interest, the Empire, and most other things that Tories hold in honour; Whigs and Whiggish persons, such as the late Duke of Devonshire; intellectual descendants of the Benthamites, and philosophical Radicals like Lord Cromer; Tory-Democrats like Randolph Churchill; stern, old-fashioned Liberal Free Trade economists like Lord Avebury and the *Spectator*; and violently protectionist country squires, like Mr. Chaplin, who had never forgiven the great betrayal of Peel. But they all agreed, or were supposed to agree, on the Union. Opposition to Home Rule was not only the link between them, but the *raison d'être* of the existence of the party. Without it the diverse elements would have broken asunder; with it they were able to hold together and bury their differences. It was convenient for all sections to keep the Union watchword well to the front for a dozen years and more after the defeat of the first Home Rule Bill. To the Liberal Unionists it was an excellent excuse for burying their Liberalism and gradually transmuting the progressiveness with which they had started in political life into a steady-going Toryism or a passionate Jingo Imperialism. Mr. Chamberlain, who in the early 'Eighties had been talking about holding the rich to ransom, was enabled to effect the transition which in the end left him and his friends rather more ardent defenders of property and privilege than most Conservatives. The change went on behind the Home Rule shield. The Liberals were so anxious about the Union that they could not be expected to put forward their ideas upon retrenchment and reform and the condition of the people. The Conservatives, on the other hand, if they felt a twinge about allying themselves with Nonconformists who hated the Church, and Little Englanders who had sneered at the Empire, could always comfort themselves by reflecting that the mischievous energies of their allies would remain latent as long as the Union was in danger. Hence it was good tactics to let it be understood that the Union always *was* in danger from the machinations of Gladstonians and Nationalists in the House of Commons, and of priests and plunderers in Ireland.

This was still the situation in 1892 and 1893. The

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Unionists fought as Unionists *et praeterea nihil* at the elections of the former year and in the struggle against the second Home Rule Bill. They were not able to whip up all the emotion which had surged out in 1886; for the first gush against Irish terrorism and Gladstonian time-serving had passed away, and the patriotic enthusiasm of the earlier struggle had largely evaporated. Still there was enough of it left to enable them to put up an excellent fight in the constituencies, and a fairly spirited one at Westminster, against the second Home Rule Bill, which the Liberals had brought forward in a perfunctory, half-hearted fashion, after the painful discredit into which their Nationalist allies had fallen, first by the Pigott revelations, and then by the quarrel over Parnell's private affairs. Unionism had triumphed, as it seemed; its attitude had been vindicated by the discredit and disrepute which temporarily descended upon Nationalism; it had shown that there was a vast amount of disorder, crime, and sedition-mongering associated with the movement in Ireland, and it was able to point to the fact that when the Lords threw out the Liberal Government's Home Rule Bill, the Cabinet and its majority in the Lower House accepted the rebuff with relief, and did not venture to appeal to the constituencies against it. The Bill itself found the Unionists still solid, and the opposition to it held them well together and gave them substantial assistance in getting back to power when the Rosebery Government fell to pieces. Nationalism was so badly hit, so weakened, not merely by the attack from without, but by internal dissensions, that for some years it faded into the background of English politics. It was not until after the election of 1910, when a Liberal Government was once more in office dependent on Nationalist votes, that the Unionists had to recall their etymological origin in order to fight the old enemy. But the ground had to be cleared by the preliminary struggle over the House of Lords. Only in the last few months have the majority of English Conservatives seriously grasped the fact that they must again deal with an attempt to institute a separate legislature and a separate executive for the people of Ireland. A third Home Rule Bill is to come before the people of England; and for the third time the leaders of the Unionist Party are asking them to repudiate the "separatist" demand and the Irish claim for local self-government.

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They do so under considerably greater disadvantages than those with which they had to contend when the enterprise was last undertaken by an English ministry. The emotionalism has gone out of the Unionist cause. The patriotic fervour and genuine spirit of revolt against dictation and disloyalty which animated the campaigns of 1886 and 1893 is dead and cannot be resuscitated. You might almost as well try to get up a No-Popery riot as to induce the ordinary Englishman to get into a rage over the thought of a parliament on College Green. That phrase itself was a sort of talisman a quarter of a century ago; but the British elector in 1912 does not know where College Green is, and, if he did, would not be excessively perturbed by the thought of a parliament there. Reminiscences of boycotting and outrage and sedition fall idly upon the ears of a generation which knows nothing about the murder of Irish landlords, the shooting in the legs of Irish peasants, and the persecution of sturdy Protestant graziers who were bold enough to deny the tyranny of the League. It does not even know what the Land League was. It has forgotten all about it; and though the newspapers sometimes bring up the historic threats of frantic Irishmen talking to excited crowds of Hibernian exiles, we are no longer thrilled by them. The electorate cannot be moved to passion by these old forgotten far-off things, these battles long ago. Unionists and Liberals have had so many other things to think about during the past two decades. Mr. Parnell and all the stormy doings associated with him are with the snows of yester-year. The electors have grown interested in foreign affairs, in the House of Lords, in constitutional changes, in the menace or advance of Socialism, in Labour unrest and fiscal controversy. The Conservative wing of the Unionist party has taken up with Tariff Reform and its real enthusiasm is centred upon that. So it is far more difficult than it was in 1893, not to mention 1886, to rouse an English audience to emotion over Home Rule. The question no longer stirs them. If it evokes any sentiment at all it is that of weariness and indifference rather than active revolt. This is not a propitious atmosphere for a violent agitation; and the Unionist leaders will be hammering on cold iron when they attempt the task in most of the English constituencies, except perhaps some of those in Lancashire and Scotland, where the old antagonism survives chiefly on sectarian

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grounds. The great majority of Englishmen and Welshmen are quite languid about Home Rule. They do not believe that Irish self-government would mean the rule of the priests, and to be perfectly candid they would not care very much if they thought it did.

And then, of course, Englishmen are bound to realise that the whole situation has changed in Ireland itself. A quarter of a century ago, the country was in a deplorable state of poverty, disorganisation and unrest. It was still rolling in the trough of the wave. It had not yet recovered its stability from the terrific disturbance produced by the Famine and intensified by economic change. The preceding forty years, which had raised England to the very height of industrial prosperity, had been evil years for Ireland. She had not yet adapted herself to the new conditions, and was still weighed down by a system of land tenure, which was hopelessly opposed alike to the feelings and to the interests of the people. It was a perfectly sound argument to bring against the Gladstonian proposals that Ireland was too distracted and too deeply honeycombed by social disorder and agrarian crime for the experiment to be tried at the time. Could it be right, it was asked, to entrust the control of their own internal affairs to a people so obviously dominated by men who had graduated in sedition: a people with whom there was no real security for life and property and little respect for the law; a people among whom secret conspiracy was rife; a people who were still steeped, so far as regards a large part of the purely agricultural districts, in the most deplorable poverty? Many Englishmen, not averse to the principle of Home Rule, were easily persuaded that the grant of self-government should, at any rate, be withheld until the economic situation had improved, and till a larger number of Irishmen had been rescued from poverty and weaned from systematic law-breaking. In this respect the change is remarkable. The argument from Irish poverty and from Irish lawlessness can no longer be urged. Ireland, as a whole, is more prosperous than the rural districts of Great Britain. It is advancing in all directions. Its agriculture is improving; it is making and saving money: and its criminal statistics will compare favourably with those of its greater sister. Ireland is doing so well that the Unionist argument is now sometimes turned round the other way. She was too poor and too lawless to have Home Rule in Gladstone's time; she is now so peaceable and so

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progressive that she ought not to want Home Rule. However, as it is perfectly clear that she *does* want Home Rule, this again is not a contention that can be brought forward upon Unionist platforms with the former triumphant confidence.

Moreover, the Unionists have themselves blunted one of the prime weapons against Home Rule in the former campaigns by their own admirable legislation. Ireland, as everybody recognised, wanted the control of its own legislation largely for agrarian purposes. It sought the power to get rid of the system of double ownership and substitute for it an occupying peasantry. That this could hardly have been carried out by a Government dependent on the votes of Irish farmers smarting from an age-long sense of wrong, without the grossest injustice to the Irish landowners, was obvious to most unprejudiced observers. The Unionist leaders could claim with perfect justice that the English people were bound in honour to protect their fellow subjects in Ireland from legalised plunder and rachine. English Home Rulers themselves were alarmed at the thought of the orgy of confiscation which would follow the establishment of a Nationalist Parliament in Dublin. Here again all is changed. The Unionists themselves, by the Purchase Acts, have gone far to settle the Irish land question, and have initiated a process which can go on smoothly and safely until the larger part of the soil of Ireland has been transferred to the tenants without the spoliation of the owners. It is much to be regretted that the beneficent process has been suspended by their Liberal successors; but no Irish Government, Nationalist or other, would now be permitted to interfere with the settlement which has brought a social and economic stability to Ireland such as she has not enjoyed for centuries. The Nationalist agitation is no longer in the main agrarian; it is chiefly political, and though of course there may be many objections to it on this score, it cannot be resisted by Englishmen on the ground which perhaps appealed most strongly to the good sense and judgment of the great mass of responsible persons in the English constituencies during the former periods of acute controversy.

It must be added that the principle of self-government through subordinate legislatures has made substantial progress in the world at large, and within the British Empire itself, during the past few years. Federalism,

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which was regarded with indifference as a somewhat exotic form of government in the 'eighties, has now established itself as pretty nearly the most characteristic constitutional development of the modern world. It is no longer necessary to point to examples drawn from foreign states; the British Empire itself is passing into a collection of locally autonomous units. In each of its greater communities, with the exception of the United Kingdom itself, there is one supreme, central government, which represents the people or the nation against the world at large, and has sovereign powers over the various subordinate governments that manage the internal affairs of the states or provinces. The Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of Canada, and the Union of South Africa are independent self-governing communities, all having a common central government for international purposes, and all technically subordinate to a single authority, namely, the King in Council. Each of these self-governing nations is organised on strict federal lines. Canada, Australia, and South Africa are bundles of states or provinces having internal autonomy but united for common purposes under a central legislature, and two of these three federated states have come into existence since the Home Rule question was last before Parliament. The creation of the Commonwealth has undoubtedly given great impetus to the idea. A further effect has been produced upon the public mind by the Union of South Africa; and the condition of the Transvaal demonstrates that a country recently in armed rebellion can become a loyal member of the Imperial family by being entrusted with the management of its own affairs and organised on a federal basis. It is impossible to ignore the reflex action of the South African situation on the Irish question. If South African nationalism has been converted into loyal association with the Imperial family, is it hopeless to suppose that the much fainter and waning dissidence of Ireland could yield to a similar, but milder, application of the same remedy? Nor can the recent phase of our dealings with India be left out of account. India, too, has obtained a large dose of federal self-government in recent years. The Governor-General is only the governor of governors, the chief ruler over many subordinate rulers, each of whom has his own separate domain, which he administers by his own staff. We talk of the Indian Civil Service but in

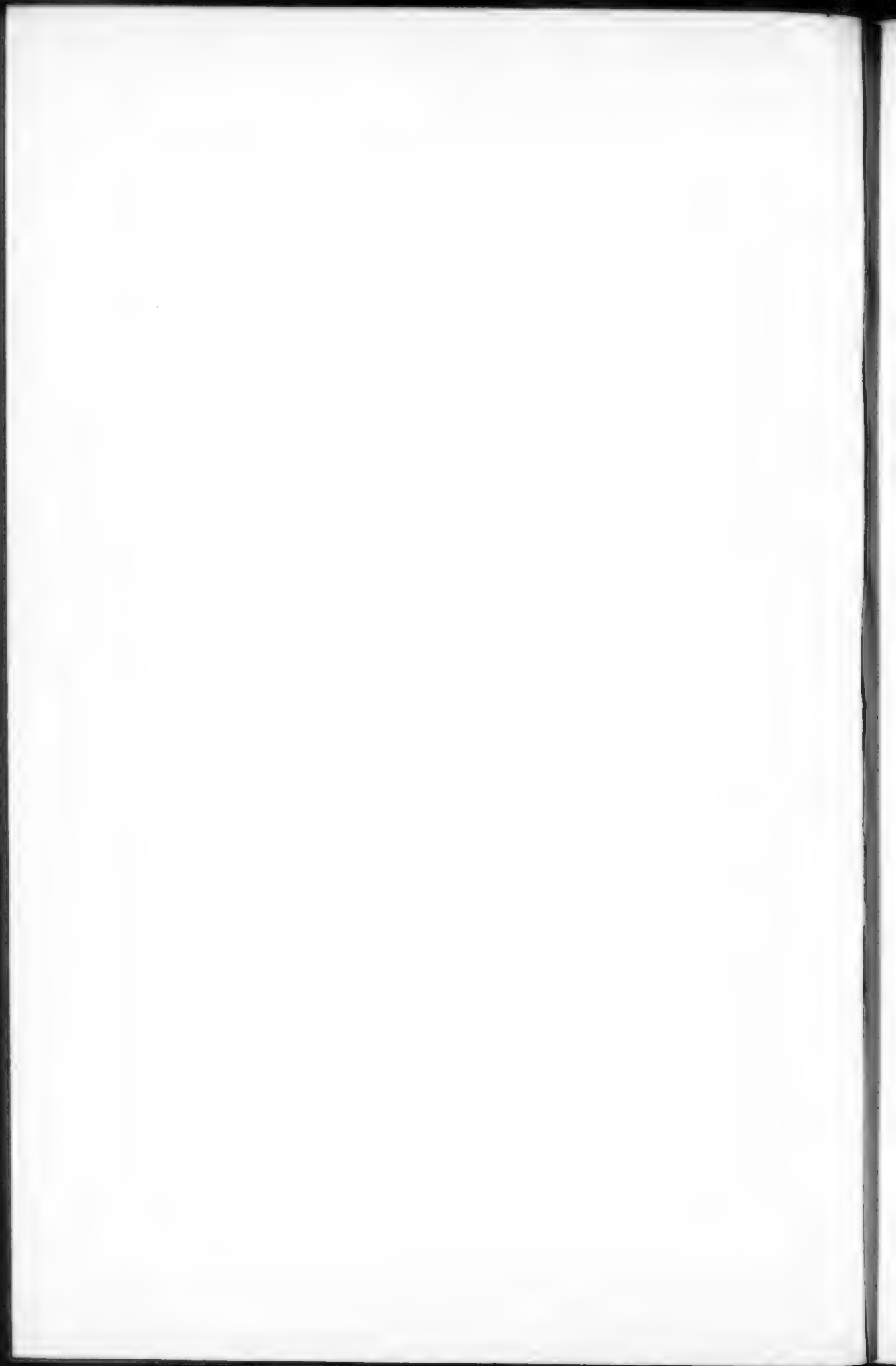
John Galsworthy, by William Strach, A.R.A.





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Mr. Linsworth



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reality there is no such thing. There is a Bengal Civil Service, a Madras Civil Service, a Punjab Commission, and so on; and the officers in each case are responsible to the provincial governors or lieutenant-governors and take their orders from them, not from the Government of India in Calcutta. Then there are the native princes, each of whom is a ruler within his own territories, subject to the general control of the Viceroy. With the new powers conferred upon the provincial councils by Lord Morley we may expect that the process will go further, and that in due course each of the great presidencies and provinces will enjoy almost as large a share of internal autonomy as the State of New South Wales or the Province of Ontario. The result will be that India may become a true federation with the Viceroy's Council as its Federal Ministry, and perhaps an enlarged legislative council as its Federal Parliament. All this, no doubt, is in the future; but in the meanwhile the constitutional development of India cannot fail to have impressed the electorate at home. And the impression makes it more difficult than ever to deny to Irishmen some extension of that right to manage their own concerns which has been granted in ever-increasing measure to other subjects of the King in America, Africa, Australia, and even in Asia.

But perhaps the greatest difficulty with which the Unionist chiefs have to contend is that their followers have been steadily shedding a good deal of their Unionism. The Liberal Unionists have been almost entirely absorbed by their allies, and, in fact, in these days many of them are more Tory than the Tories themselves. No doubt, some of the older men still feel the touch of that fierce sentiment which animated them in the fray of the later Victorian years; but the younger men are thinking of other things, and so are the rank and file of their supporters in the constituencies. Great crises in foreign affairs have swept over the world since Mr. Gladstone died; and a generation which has been through the Boer War, and the Russo-Japanese War, and the new alliances, and the growth of the German Navy, and has seen a vast world-conflict looming on the horizon half-a-dozen times, has other preoccupations besides that of Home Rule. For nine Conservatives out of ten there is only one subject of overpowering interest in domestic politics, and that is Tariff Reform. The enthusiasm which the younger men have

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brought to the question of fiscal change equals the interest which their predecessors gave to that of the Irish Union a quarter of a century ago. It is with this cause that their emotion and their sentiment are really engaged ; and there are many able men in the Conservative and Constitutional Associations throughout the country who regret that the settlement of the economic controversy in the manner they desire has been impeded by the antagonism which their predecessors created between the Conservative Party and the representatives of the majority of Irishmen. The line taken by the Unionist leaders under Lord Salisbury's direction has given the Liberals and Free Traders the permanent support of four-fifths of the Irish representation. Ireland, at least Catholic and Nationalist Ireland, wants Home Rule ; but then the Conservatives are aware that it wants some kind of Tariff Reform also, and many of them are impatient of a policy which has permanently thrown over to the other side tens of thousands of voters whose interests and whose convictions would otherwise incline them to protection. They consider that the alliance between Liberalism, with its Cobdenite doctrines, its taste for secularist education, and its leaning towards Labour-Socialism, has no real affinity with the opinions of a people who are passionately in favour of religious education and have no love for Nonconformity in religion, whose spiritual guides condemn Socialism in all its forms, and whose material interests have been sacrificed to the Manchester theories. More than once the militant Tariff Reformers have grown restive under the compulsory antagonism to Irish aspirations dictated to them by the tradition of the past, and have shown a disposition to inquire whether it would not be worth while to promote Tariff Reform and other things dear to the Conservative heart by making some concession to the Irish demand for self-government. It is the constitutional question which alone stands between Irish Nationalists and Conservatives ; and if Conservatives and Tariff Reformers should obtain an immense access of strength from Ireland by some concession to the Nationalist demand, that concession, within the limits of Imperial safety, might be worth making. When Unionists are in this rationalising mood they find it easy to recollect that Home Rule on a federal basis has, in fact, often commended itself to some of the ablest of the Unionist statesmen, and has

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more than once been almost adopted as the official policy of the party.

This creates another difficulty for the Unionists. For a century and a quarter the idea of Anglo-Irish federation has been brought forward from time to time by some of the ablest men in the Conservative ranks. External pressure or internal forces have prevailed against it; but it is constantly recurring, and reasserting its fascination for Tories who think. The greatest of all Conservative statesmen, before circumstances and rebellion drove him to the suppression of the Irish Parliament, had prepared a scheme of federal union. Pitt desired to fuse the two countries into one, for larger and Imperial purposes, by the representation of Ireland in an Imperial Parliament, with the Irish Parliament remaining in existence and free to deal with local legislation. Had Pitt's scheme of 1785 been carried into effect the Act of Union would have taken a very different form, and the history of England and Ireland in the nineteenth century might have missed the chapters which tell of the Famine and the slow economic decay and dwindling vitality of the one country while the other was rising to the zenith of its industrial and commercial prosperity. The war in France and the Irish Insurrection drove the federal conception out of British politics for many years. The Famine crushed the Repeal movement; and for nearly a generation after that catastrophe Ireland had no spirit for a constitutional agitation. But in May, 1870, the Home Rule Association was founded by Isaac Butt, and its object was "to obtain for our country the right and privilege of managing our own affairs by a Parliament assembled in Ireland . . . to secure for the Parliament under a federal arrangement, the right of legislating for and regulating all matters relating to the internal affairs of Ireland, and control over Irish resources and expenditure, subject to the obligation of contributing our just proportion of the Imperial expenditure. . . . The Association invites the co-operation of all Irishmen who are willing to join in seeking for Ireland a federal arrangement based upon these general principles."

This moderate federalising movement was swept out of the way by Parnell, who played upon the hatred and land-hunger which had been evoked by the events of the previous fifty years, and began with a demand for something like complete national independence. He roused

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passions which went beyond his grasp, and soon became revolutionary. But while all Englishmen repudiated the claim to Irish separation, the Conservatives, even at the height of the Land League movement, were still disposed to look favourably upon Federal Home Rule. Lord Carnarvon, who, as Colonial Secretary, had watched over Canadian Federation in 1867, and had tried to federate South Africa in 1877, was in 1885 inclined to co-operate with the Nationalist leaders in devising a federal constitution for Great Britain and Ireland, with some sort of separate legislature for the smaller country. Lord Randolph Churchill took the same view, and went very far in his advances towards the Home Rulers; and even Lord Salisbury, in the famous Newport speech of October 7th, 1885, talked of "the creation of a great central body" as a possible means of extending Irish local government, and spoke of federation, though not immediate federation, as a plan which might be entertained for solving the whole problem. Mr. Chamberlain, in 1886, "looked for the solution in the direction of the principle of federation . . . some form of federation which should really maintain the Imperial unity, and would, at the same time, conciliate the desire for a national local government." He suggested that a Commission should be appointed, consisting of the leading men of all Parties, to deal with the question of Irish constitutional and administrative reform. If such a body had been set to work in 1886, it would probably have recommended something in the nature of legislative devolution and federalist Home Rule.

Mr. Gladstone's precipitate surrender to Parnell, still with the taint of his seditious associations upon him, wiped out all such projects. Home Rule meant Parnellism and the agrarian conspiracy for English Conservatives; and they threw themselves into the uncompromising opposition which defeated Gladstone, and for years left Unionism, the negation of Irish Nationalism, as the prime article of faith for those who were not Gladstonians. The wave had not yet spent itself when the Unionists addressed themselves to the second Home Rule Bill, and they were not in the mood to make terms with it, or to recognise that it went some way towards meeting their former objections. But in the years that followed—the years mainly of their own tenure of office—some of them again turned towards Irish control of Irish affairs embodied in separate organs of

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executive and legislative authority. In 1899 the Salisbury Government, on Sir Horace Plunkett's advice, passed the Act which created a "Council of Agriculture" for the whole of Ireland, partly nominated and partly representative, with large powers in connection with agriculture, technical education, industry, afforestation, fisheries, locomotion, and other matters. Mr. Balfour's brother was Chief Secretary at the time. When Mr. Balfour himself became Prime Minister he appointed one of his closest political associates and personal friends, Mr. George Wyndham, to be Chief Secretary, and Mr. Wyndham adopted an enlarged policy of devolution that moved in the direction of self-government. It is unnecessary to recall the transactions connected with the appointment of Lord MacDonnell, and the retirement of Mr. Wyndham. The Unionist stalwarts were too strong for Mr. Balfour and Lord Lansdowne. But that there was still a distinct feeling in favour of a limited form of Home Rule within the Conservative Party was shown by the events which occurred in the autumn of 1910.

The secrets of the "Constitutional Conference" of that year have not been officially revealed and are not likely to be. But some of them are public property. Everybody knows that there were *pourparlers*—not in the Conference itself but at private meetings outside—between the leaders of the two parties, or certain of them, for a settlement of the Irish question by agreement. Mr. Balfour, the most successful Chief Secretary of the nineteenth century, who knew all about Lord Carnarvon's and Lord Randolph Churchill's tentatives, and was a party to those of Mr. Gerald Balfour and Mr. Wyndham, was probably not disinclined to listen to an arrangement on Federalist lines. And Mr. Asquith and Mr. Lloyd George were perhaps equally willing to settle Home Rule by means of Conservative aid, and so disembarass themselves of their Redmondite allies. To gain this assistance the Ministry would have given much. They might have made concessions over the House of Lords, and even, it was whispered, over Fiscal Reform. No wonder it is not deemed desirable on either side to make "revelations," since the deal did not come off. Yet there was nothing disgraceful in the attempt to decide a great constitutional question by arrangement between the parties instead of by the customary quarrel. How far the informal negotiations went few people know beyond those immediately concerned. But there was

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undoubtedly a moment when it was supposed that Mr. Balfour and Lord Lansdowne had consented to withdraw their objection to a scheme of Irish autonomy provided it were framed on lines of strict subordination to the Imperial Parliament. And so far had this gone that the "tip" went round to the chief Unionist newspapers to "write up" Federalism, and they nearly all accepted it with remarkable alacrity and with a docility which speaks volumes for the party discipline. The readers of the *Times*, *Morning Post*, *Standard*, *Daily Mail*, *Pall Mall Gazette*, *Observer*, and other great journals rubbed their eyes with amazement when they discovered their favourite guides paying compliments to the Nationalist leaders, talking with unaccustomed indulgence of Irish national aspirations, pointing out with philosophical breadth of view that a policy of mere negation was futile, and suggesting that Home Rule itself ought to be considered with an open mind in relation to the larger question of local and Imperial federation. "Pacificus," in the *Times*, had been permeating the public mind with this idea, and "Pacificus" was supposed to have plenary inspirations from high quarters. The *Times* editorially thought his suggestions "worthy of the careful attention of the Unionist Party and the nation." The *Standard* held that Federalism "need not be dismissed in the dark; it is a fair subject for consideration and discussion." The *Daily Express* approached the subject from an elevated standpoint: "The well-founded opinion is that a settlement means a scheme of Imperial Federation, of Universal Devolution, of Home-Rule-all-Round. Conservative extremists are aghast. They consider that the Tory Party is being dished." "But," added this high-toned journal, "for our part we are quite indifferent, in a matter of such vital Imperial importance, to the dishing of one party or the other." Even the *Observer* was temporarily converted. Mr. Garvin exhibited an intense though transient enthusiasm for a settlement with the Nationalists, and a stern contempt for the old Tory *non possumus* attitude. "There is a changed Ireland and a changed Empire in a changed world. If there is to be no change in the Unionist position, a struggle upon the old lines may be attempted, but with not a shadow of probability that it will be attended by the same success. . . . In resisting even a strong and safe scheme of Irish, or general, devolution—in repudiating the federal solution, which is

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the very principle of union for all modern states dealing with problems like this—the Dominions will not be with us, and even the Party of Preference and Tariff Reform will find itself appealing to Great Britain in vain."

Unhappily for themselves, or at least for their reputation for consistency, the Conservative publicists had reckoned without the reactionary element within the party. The Unionists no-surrender groups in the Lords and Commons brought Mr. Balfour sharply to book, and threatened him with open mutiny if there were any further efforts at an agreement over Irish Government. The inchoate negotiations were promptly suspended, and another tip went out to the party journalists, to the effect that there was to be no more talk about concession, and that the orthodox policy was again to be uncompromising rejection of the Nationalist demand. The editors wore ship with astonishing agility, and got off upon the old tack. They ceased to talk about federation, and were speedily in full cry on the ancient scent of American gold, sedition, separation, disloyalty and all the rest of it. The philosophers who in October were asking the Extremists not "to make our flesh creep" with dire prophecy were in November engaged in that very process, and hunting up their dusty references to the Clan-na-Gael, Patrick Ford, Michael Davitt, and Parnell's "inextinguishable hate" for England. Mr. Garvin, who had been raising the "voice of reason" and examining "with far-reaching vision" the theory of "a federal solution of the Irish problem," put back the milder weapons into his armoury, and presently was executing his fiercest war-dances, tomahawk in hand, round the "Molly Maguires" and the "Dollar-drivers." But the effects of the campaign of pacification, brief as it was, cannot be wiped out of the public memory. The shriek over separation and "Rome Rule" rings hollow; and Unionists, remembering that extraordinary episode of eighteen months ago, cannot be roused by these denunciations as they were in the 'eighties and the 'nineties. It is futile to endeavour to work up the Protestant fury and the patriotic fever of the Gladstone day. The lighted torches may be waved, but their sparks only fall upon damp powder; and the feat of overwhelming Home Rule in a wave of popular indignation will hardly be achieved again. Mr. Bonar Law, Sir Edward Carson, and Mr. F. E. Smith, may wear the make-up of Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Randolph,

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and Mr. Goschen, but they are playing to a colder audience. It is "the voice of reason," not the appeal of passion and emotion, which must be uttered this time. The electors have looked at the Home Rule bogey so long that they have ceased to fear it. The Unionist leaders will have to take the new Bill on its merits, and endeavour to show that it is weak on the practical and financial side, and that it does really contravene those principles which some of them were inclined to support so recently as in the autumn of 1910. The battle will be fought over the difference between Separation—which Ministers and Nationalists in terms repudiate—and Federation, which many Unionists are quite willing to accept if they are persuaded that it can be genuine.

# A Critical Calendar

By Walter Sickert

THERE is nothing that a writer who is aiming at a reputation for sobriety fears to tackle more than his profounder admirations. I have desired for some years to write something on the work of Maurice Denis. I refrained at first, because I had not seen enough of it to venture. An obvious occasion was furnished by Mr. Fry's earth-shaking jumble at the Grafton Gallery, where everything was booked through, like the baggage of a travelling company, as "Post-impressionism," including Cézanne, who was, if anything, rather pre-impressionist. The nonsense boom found me and Sir William Richmond standing shoulder to shoulder, the *Landwehr* of classicism. Mr. McColl, at the time on sick-leave, has, I see by the *Nineteenth Century and After*, fallen in, and answered to the roll-call. He fails to appreciate Gauguin, and his point of view may be said to remain Protectionist, and somewhat early New English. But the cubical, conical, cylindrical, rhomboidal invasion is, I think, routed, and everything, as they say in France, has re-entered into order. The only lady-fauviste in the country is reported to have taken the night boat to Montmartre disguised in a thick blue outline, and students are back at their easels continuing to study drawing.

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The dust being laid, we have been given a further opportunity of studying, at the Goupil Gallery, an important and representative exhibit of the work of Maurice Denis. It would, perhaps, be as well to approach it, for the moment, without taking into account the writings of the painter. Mr. McColl reminds us that Maurice Denis has written an article on Cézanne, which I remember very well. It is sometimes necessary to separate clearly the two personalities of that strange occasional compound, the writer-painter, or painter-writer. In Venice a soup of rice and green peas is called "*risi-bisi*," or "*bisi-risi*," according as the rice or

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the peas predominate. If the soup has stood, and is thick, the compound is described as "*massa fissa*," "very stodgy" shall we translate it? Mr. Steer, who has the rare faculty of putting a witty and silent finger, like the advertisement, on the spot, with deadly certainty, none the less deadly for that he, wise man, elects to diagnose *in camera*, is suggesting the instant formation of a society of writer-painters, or painter-writers, in which no one shall be allowed to exhibit but journalists. I once heard a prudent Norman give, as a reason for not interfering between two dogs who were fighting on the route d'Eu: "*Qué que vous voulez? Ils s'entredéchireront, puis l'affaire sera faite.*"

I need not point out to my readers certain disastrous limitations in my critical equipment, of which no one is more acutely conscious, or more thoroughly ashamed, than myself. My mother's old cook, when she failed, as she sometimes did, to understand the earliest efforts of my younger brothers in the formation of a prose style, was wont to console herself by telling them that they were talking "Double-Dutch." I too used, in earlier days, to try to unravel the Double-Dutch of the Higher Art Criticism. But I have long given it up. I remember the occasion of my definitive renunciation, perhaps I should call it my defeat. I used to follow, with the respectful awe of a peasant in the presence of learning, the Hornes, the Loesers and the Berensons in their complex incantations. "How can anyone," I used to think, "know so much?" I once knew a French governess who, when defeated in a struggle to express herself in her still imperfect English, would say, "Enfin! je *me* comprends." "Perhaps," I thought, "they understand themselves, if not each other." But, in a moment of imprudence, Mr. Berenson, who, I understand, can command a serious fee for giving an opinion on the authenticity of the obscurest of obscure old masters, promulgated, as the cream of all his investigations, the conclusion that Matisse is the great modern master! That kind of connoisseurship, then, must have a purely mystical basis. It must be entirely unrelated to the more pedestrian criticism that is based on such trivial grounds as tradition, observation and comparison. It enters rather into the region of dogma, and is purely subjective and capricious. For me, as for my mother's old cook, it must remain Double-Dutch.

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Mr. Fry is the strangest of compounds, and the greatest care must be taken lest injustice be done to his paintings by cross references to his writings. As a painter his practice has been logical, and his late immersion in the waters of the Seine has suddenly matured him. His last exhibition is full of undeniable achievement. In the zeal of his conversion he has, it is true, taken, ready-made, a set of formulæ which are already somewhat worn and impersonal. But struggling through these is discernible a clear thread of personal vision and original effort. I am often met with the demurrer that his painting is the result of intelligence. May the real answer to this not be: "Well, what is the matter with intelligence?" Modern criticism is obsessed with the word "temperament." You cannot take a dowager down to dinner without her asking you whether you think Mrs. So-and-So has "temperament." "How the devil should I know, madam?" We remember a *mot* of Degas on temperament, the drift of which has been preserved for us by George Moore. Who speaks of achieving art by temperament reminded him, he said, of the strong man straddling before a booth at a fair, and lifting the fat woman on the palm of one hand.

In his writing Mr. Fry seems to me to drop occasionally into Double-Dutch, only to be understood by persons having a Super-University Education. But when it comes to intoning, with grace and unction, the pure ritual of Double-Dutch, no Englishman can touch a Frenchman who chooses to give his mind to it. The Frenchman, *entier* in everything, brings, when he embarks on nonsense, to it the same concision, and force, and order that have served him so well in the region of commonsense. Talk of gravity—imponderable, a face whose straightness is geometrical. None of us can do it, none! So that, in considering the painting of Maurice Denis, we would do well to leave his literary *hommage à Cézanne* out of the question. Parturient genius is notoriously capricious in its nourishment, and is apt to dignify the dish it fancies, perhaps for some element, specially needed at a given moment by its mysterious processes, into a panacea of universal application. Denis might have had some special use for Cézanne at a given moment in his development. To the really creative painter, it must be remembered, the work of other men is mainly nourishment, to assist him in his own creation. That is

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one reason why the laity are wise to approach the criticism of art by an artist with the profoundest mistrust.

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It is just about a quarter of a century ago since I ranged myself, to my own satisfaction, definitively against the Whistlerian anti-literary theory of drawing. All the greater draughtsmen tell a story. When people, who care about art, criticise the anecdotic "picture of the year," the essence of our criticism is that the story is a poor one, poor in structure or poor as drama, poor as psychology. Such pictures are generally told from the point of view that may be called "quite nice," the feminist point of view, the point of view that is flattering to the purse and the pretensions of the occidental product that a rude German philosopher has called the "super-cow."

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A painter may tell his story like Balzac, or like Mr. Hichens. He may tell it with relentless impartiality, he may pack it tight, until it is dense with suggestion and refreshment, or his dilute stream may trickle to its appointed crisis of adultery, sown thick with deprecating and extenuating generalisations about "sweet women."

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Maurice Denis tells stories, and always of absorbing interest. His stories are sometimes of life as it is in its simplicity, and oddness and tenderness, and sometimes of the most fantastic romance. He has the rare gift of making his realities romantic and interesting, and his romances probable. His achievement is that of the complete painter. If the *Futuristes* savour too much of Bedlam, and the *Passéistes* of stagnation, Maurice Denis seems to combine something of what is vital in both. He is certainly one of the great Presentists. In his "Adoration of the Magi," the Blessed Virgin is sleeping instead of sitting up, and the scene is only rendered more impressive and pathetic by this touch of homely truthfulness. His execution is beyond praise in its masterly simplicity. Light and shade are massed in discreet and cunning chromatic oppositions of great weight and ingenuity. These pictures "carry," and would decorate wherever they were placed, even *à contre-jour*, or in a badly-lit church. Maurice Denis is a rare spirit in that he is at the same time witty and tender. He reminds me in this of Tourguenev, neither dupe nor cynic. You can rightly call him an *esprit juste*. He is the reverse

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of a pedant. His scholarship sits naturally on him, and he passes from the Odyssey or the Bible to a tennis match on the sea-shore, or a baby's bath in a little modern nursery, witty, tender, serene and comprehending. He vivifies the classics and poetises the daily round.

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Think of the treadmill of some of our own unhappy "hands" of the palette who are commissioned by a dealer to do, say, forty fruitstalls, twice a year (with oranges), or the backs of forty colleges. And note, that the fruitstall and orange man isn't allowed to do backs, nor the colleges man, oranges! Oddly enough, our insular decadence in painting can be traced back, I think quite surely, to puritan standards of propriety. If you may not treat pictorially the ways of men and women, and their resultant babies, as one enchained comedy or tragedy, human and *de mœurs*, the artists must needs draw inanimate objects—picturesque if possible. We must affect to be thrilled by scaffolding, or seduced by oranges. But if the old masters had confined themselves to scaffolding by night, and oranges by day, we should have had neither Rubens nor Tintoretto. And what landscape by a pure "landscape-man" can you set beside a landscape by Rubens?

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Writers are allowed a freer hand. What is "What Maisie Knew" but a scarifying account of the *chassez croisez* of as arrant a gang of whores and bullies as any Villon drew? "*C'est à vous dégôuter du vice pour toujours*," as my *Anglomane* friend Monsieur le Baron George (*sans "s"*) Passelamanche de la Petitecasquette once said to me. And Henry James lives, bless him, and will die, in the odour of sanctity. But I would not advise a British painter to depict a scene dealing with anyone lower in the social scale than, say, a University extension lecturer and his fiancée, or to set his scene in a "Lokaal," as they say in Germany, less genteel than a parlour, or to costume it otherwise than in "faultless evening dress." National dispensation, on the other hand, by a paradox worth noting, is gladly given to pictures representing Cleopatra or Messalina, possibly because these ladies *dossiers* are not present to the minds of critics "on *this* side of the Channel"—ominous, emphatic and almost threatening phrase.

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It is all very well for Professor Richmond to shake the

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dust of his Royal Academy professorship off his feet with minatory warnings to the youth of the country against the consumption of Post-Impressionist lollipops. We must remember that the youth of the country is hungry, and that the Royal Academy offers no bread to put under its sharp teeth. Mr. Abbey's exhibition will not do. Even Macaulay's schoolboy knows that Mr. Abbey's "black-and-white" is poor illustration. His Falstaff without a beard is like the new reading of an "intellectual" actor-manager. His Henry VIII. is a monstrosity as a representation of a Tudor King. His Ann Boleyn, a heavy lay-figure. The Academy must remember that there are now no students left who do not know that black fabrics undergo the influence of light and shade, the same as anything else. Even if there were, they could see that the billicock of the next man who stands in front of Mr. Abbey's painting of a scene from Richard III. receives light, whereas, in Mr. Abbey's painting, the heads occur in a frozen lake of ivory-black, embedded like almonds in a piece of almond-rock. And, for a "bit of colour," as we used to say at Gandish's, every now and again there is a dress of pure vermilion, also immune, quite, from any influence of light and shade. Mr. Finberg, in an excellent article in the *Star* the other day, pointed to the abandonment of light and shade as the great error of modern decadent painting, not confined, of course, to Mr. Abbey.

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An attempt is made, from time to time, to set up the theory that posthumous exhibitions are not to be frankly criticised. Anything but praise, it is argued, is painful to the surviving relations of the artist. This pretension surely condemns itself. Could the severest free criticism be more damaging to an artist's reputation than the admission implied by such a plea, whether it is publicly put forward in the press, or by private letters to critics? Do the Royal Academicians know the story of the bear who struck up a devoted friendship with a man? The story goes that while the man slept the bear kept watch over him, and seeing a fly settling on the sleeper's face, the bear, in pursuance of his zealous friendship, promptly dropped a huge rock on the man's face, in order to kill the fly.

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By a misunderstanding, due to what can only be

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described as culpable carelessness on my part, I rendered myself, in the January number of this review, responsible for the statement that the British Museum contained no proof of Karel du Jardin's "Battle Field." Of course, the Museum has it, three times over, twice in the Sheepshanks Album, and once in the separate packet of du Jardin's etchings. A reproduction of this print is bound up in Karl Robert's useful *Traité Pratique de la gravure à l'eau-forte (Paysage et figure)*, Paris, Henri Laurens, 6, rue de Tournon. It is interesting to compare the du Jardin with the etching by Legros in the same book. Legros, who is certainly one of the most respectable of the moderns, cannot support the comparison at all. It is perhaps useful to put on record the real technical criticism of Legros' etched work. His shading is nearly always, on the plate, from right to left, downwards, at an angle of about 60 deg., the movement, of course, of least resistance for the hand. This method is pursued no matter what the lighting may be. In the print it becomes, of course, left to right. If we look at the plates in this book by du Jardin, by Millet, or by Ch. Jacque, we see that the shading is dictated by intellectual, and not physical, reasons. It plays with entire suppleness from light to shade, in directions varying with the needs of structural expression.

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Legros has been spoken of as a great teacher, which he wasn't. A man of Mr. Strang's talent would have been remarkable whatever school he had attended. A great teacher vivifies not one or two, but hundreds of students directly, and, indirectly, countless ones. He reclaims whole intellectual territories into cultivation, and leaves his mark on generations. Apart from the question of degrees of personal force, Legros was exiled at the wrong moment from subjects and influences that had formed his inspiration. His themes of French country and peasant life could, in London, only become, as time went on, fainter and fainter echoes of any living impression. His professorship depleted his creative energy, instead of nourishing it. A great teacher is refreshed and inspired, not only by his direct, but by his indirect creation. Legros had no clearly reasoned philosophy of procedure, and did not understand the closely-woven plexus between observation, drawing, composition, and colour. The heads he painted in two

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hours before his classes, with their entire absence of relation between head and background, were almost models of how not to do it. It is scarcely a paradox to say that a professor of painting should show rather how little, than how much, can properly be done in the first coat of paint, if the last is to crown a work, as distinguished from a sketch.

# A Word on the Hammerstein Opera

By Henry Hardinge

MR. OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN, with rare courage, came to London, vowed to conquer—most unfortunately he tried to do so by the methods with which he conquered New York. Well, Mr. Hammerstein was beaten; but—being a clever man—he promptly set about to discover wherein his error lay. Now his initial mistake shone forth much clearer than the sun at noonday during an average London winter—he had misjudged London, our life, our resources, and, worst of all, entirely misjudged the trend of the new art movement; consequently he failed to get within hailing distance of the great musical public of London. He merely hung out a bait, of somewhat doubtful quality, to the fashionable rich—ignorant that in London wealth in fashionable life is strictly limited, not only as to numbers but as to intellect. Here was the great basic blunder of Mr. Hammerstein's Intelligence Department; but the error has been discovered, and (if he act swiftly and with large intention) discovered in time to wipe out the initial losses of his endeavour.

First comes the question, "Will the reduction of the prices by itself prove a sufficient bait to draw the great musical public permanently to the theatre in the Kingsway?" It is good to hear that, so far, the business at the box office has gone up by leaps and bounds; but there is a chance—some may say a certainty—that this increase of popularity is merely a flash in the pan, and so soon as curiosity is satisfied so soon will the receipts begin to fall again. Should this happen it would indeed be lamentable. Is there not, perhaps, another and a better way by which the great art-loving public may be drawn permanently to the London Opera House?

Now to what public did Mr. Hammerstein appeal when

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he put forth "Norma," "Traviata," "Sonnambula." The music-loving public is not to be attracted by such wares. As well might Sir Herbert Tree have opened His Majesty's Theatre with a revival of "Our Boys."

There is at this moment a strong feeling for spectacle, and surely it is a truism to say that romance is the soul of opera; therefore the old "realistic" conditions are against opera.

Since Gordon Craig started the revolution in 1890, the movement has made giant strides. The great defect of opera, as mounted in England, is the crude, extravagant, vulgar and pretentious scenery. But Craig, in making the colour and form of the scenery embrace the mood of each movement, solved the one evil of opera.

Now what a superb achievement for Oscar Hammerstein to win, and keep for his own, the great musical London public with opera produced by Gordon Craig or Sidney Sime! If opera is to be permanent at the London Opera House, this is the only way. Never was there such a time, such an opportunity for an artistic manager as to-day. Never was such a large public waiting to welcome the right thing in music, in scenery, in acting, as there is to-day in London.

That public is not at all interested in managers wasting great sums on stars, nor in the glorification of extravagant mounting; as a matter of fact it is weary of the old, elaborate, so-called realistic, scenery that has long ago been brought to whatever perfection it could be brought at every West End theatre. The public wants great music; that is all. The old bad ways are dead; and if Oscar Hammerstein has but the courage to start on a fresh foundation—as widely different from the old Covent Garden tradition as possible—he will sweep the whole musical public of London into his theatre.

Why should operatic stars be paid more than those of the concert platform? Are not Casal, Bauer, Kreisler as great, and greater, artists than Caruso? Why then any need for inflated prices? They are totally unnecessary. The stars would glitter with as bright an effulgence once a limit were set upon the highest. There is still a cachet about London that all singers covet, whilst such an opera house would make the reputation of an artist appearing thereat, and prove such an advertisement as no singer could, and no artist wish to, refuse.

I have said that to the great musical public the popular

## A WORD ON THE HAMMERSTEIN OPERA

operatic star is nothing—the work of art as a whole is everything. Herein lies the gulf—broad as the Atlantic—between London and New York, where the name of the star is displayed in gigantic letters of fire, and underneath in small letters the diligent searcher discovers “Hamlet” to be the subject.

To-day, when Craig, Sime, Brangwyn, Shaw, Holbrooke, and many other men of genius have come or are coming into their own, when the great musical public crowd our concert halls to hear a new work by a great master, to offer the old operas produced in the old manner is merely to strike that public in the face.

Let us, therefore, earnestly entreat Mr. Hammerstein, since he has been courageous so far, to be bold yet one step further and he will have a great public at his back—ay, and a loyal, faithful, permanent, not merely curious, public—a public such as no operatic manager has yet had in England.

Let him give us Wagner, Beethoven, Mozart, Debussy, produced by a genius in colour and light, such as Gordon Craig or Sime, and he will find a fortune—and a large fortune—waiting to his hand. Not only that, but this permanent, self-supporting theatre would revolutionise the opera not only of London but of the whole world. I say without fear of contradiction that for the man who has the courage to produce “The Ring,” or “The Magic Flute” under these circumstances a fortune is waiting.

Let there be a fine orchestra, with adequate singers—not stars—and Sime or Craig at their head; then should we see such an interpretation as Wagner or Mozart only dreamed of. Think what either of these men would make of the opening scene of “Rheingold”? Think of the ride of the Valkyries—the warrior maidens flying through storm and wind as Craig would suggest the scene. Think of the “Feuerzauber” as Sime would interpret that tremendous music that sets forth so unerringly the leaping, curling flames licking the rock on which Brunnhilde sleeps. London and not Bayreuth would be the Wagnerian’s Mecca. Imagine Sime’s Tristan. Picture what Craig would do for Pelleas and Melisande, for the poetry and mystery of Mozart. We have never seen Mozart’s operas in London. Occasionally there has been a pantomimic, spasmodic performance at Covent Garden—a representation never.

Now all this glory might be Mr. Hammerstein’s; and

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he might bask in its golden radiance, did he but realise the vast public waiting on the man who can recognise that modern art can only live under modern conditions. Fortune and success are there—just for the gathering—and who can doubt this with the recent success of “Sumurûn,” “Œdipus,” “The Miracle,” and the vogue for pageants held up and down the country fresh in his mind!

Neither is it a question of expense. Nothing could be more expensive than the gorgeous methods upon which Mr. Hammerstein recklessly flung away his money. The time is ripe—*now* is the time, now. The multitude cries for bread, why give it the stones of Covent Garden? The old school of critics sneered at the art of Shaw and of Brangwyn, of Wagner and many another, but the public has given them honour.

Let Mr. Hammerstein be up and doing. Let him sweep away the old operas and conventions, above all the horrible old scenery which is one of Covent Garden's most cherished traditions, and let him lift his eyes towards the dawn of that new era for opera which rose with the coming of Craig. Let him summon some such artist to his side.

To ape Covent Garden is to solicit ultimate failure. The three conditions of success are cheap seats, artistic production such as Craig and the Russians have revealed to us, and music, not the “old hats” of Victorian operatic tradition.

## The Censorship Scandal

IT is now the duty of all artists and writers to draw the attention of the Government to the Censorship question, which has become a farce and a national scandal.

The appointment of "Dear Old Charlie" to the post was an offence to the intelligence of London; but it is not against the censor or censors (for there are henceforth to be two, their joint age numbering over a hundred years) that opinion must take action, but rather against the office and its constitution with the absurd anachronistic provisoes and regulations attaching to it, which, dating from a Feudal age, are to-day ridiculous and in the highest degree destructive to the expression and development of theatrical art. The latest perpetration of the censor is to ban two plays by two of our leading literary artists—Mr. Israel Zangwill and Mr. Eden Phillpotts—because Mr. Zangwill, in *The Next Religion*, deals with religion; and because Mr. Phillpotts, in *The Secret Woman*, makes his Cornish men and women talk naturally, and not in the false-sentimental, artificial or vulgar lingo which the commercial playwright and convention have adroitly stereotyped as the veneer of stage morality. Let us look into the matter seriously from the moral point of view, and first of all let us take the literary antecedents of Mr. Brookfield's latest victims—Mr. Zangwill and Mr. Phillpotts.

Mr. Zangwill, it is well known, is a leader in the Zionist movement; he is a man essentially of intellectual and spiritual ideas, the author of several powerful, human books, which have made an impression upon Europe generally, books which may truly be said to have been inspired by a sense of justice and nobility of thought, which have been civilising influences, as were the works of Dickens. He is a zealous reformer; but no man, though some may consider him to be a bit of a fanatic, can contend that both as thinker and writer Mr. Zangwill has not been consistently sincere and, in the Biblical spirit, Christian.

Mr. Phillpotts is rightly well-known as a brilliant novelist and poet, in a word, as an artist. He has never written

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a commercial book, never pandered to the vulgarity of popularity, and never has a word been spoken against the moral value of his work. The records of these two men are not only admirably bright, they are stimulating. Both writers are a credit to English letters. They are men of proved literary and social honesty.

So much for the men. Now what about the plays? Mr. Zangwill's play, *The Next Religion*, is taboo by regulation, for the rule is that no play dealing with religious subjects may be passed. There is no question at all as to whether the play is fine or inspiring—the subject bans it, just as the title of *Samson and Delilah* banned that opera from our stage until last year, as *Salome* is banned from the theatre, while all variations of *Salome* posturising, dancing and mimicry are permitted *ad nauseam* on the halls. That settled *The Next Religion*. Mr. Zangwill is treated by the Lord Chamberlain as if he were a naughty boy of fifteen, and "Dear Old Charlie" is revived for the occasion.

Mr. Phillpotts' play, on the contrary, comes under no regulation. I have read the play carefully (many of us have seen it played, thanks to the initiative and courage of Mr. Granville Barker and his supporters), and I can truthfully say that it is a notable piece of work; a play of power and beauty, containing nothing offensive to taste or morality, a play which ranks Mr. Phillpotts among the few English dramatists who write to-day for the stage with the sincerity of art and truthfulness. Why is this play banned? The novel from which it was dramatised was not. The answer is because our stage is under the tutelage of an obsolete system of control. Because these people of Mr. Phillpotts' are represented truthfully, as Ibsen drew men and women. Because for once in a way a literary man has strayed into the domain of play-writing. Because he has rightly refused to accept the censor's edition of his own work.

This Eton-jacketing of our stage has really gone too far. Looking at our theatre, we see little but artificial and commercial productions, with here and there a bright spot such as *The Pigeon* at the Royalty, the work of "The Little Theatre," and now the endeavour of the Kingsway. We see the inanity of Grossmith ballets, musical comedy, soulless plays everywhere; but the moment a conscientious author writes a serious play the veto of the Lord Chamberlain has him by the throat. And the reason is because art

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is still regarded in England with misgiving, because the artist is not allowed to take his art seriously, because our stage has lost its vitality under the blight of Puritanism and the box-office entertainment system.

The question is, What are the artists of this country to do? "Dear Old Charlie," it must be remembered, is only the wheel in the machine; the motive power of the engine is the office of the Lord Chamberlain. A Trade Union would seem the only expedient—a union of the artists of England in defence of their lawful rights of expression. What is the use of a Shakespeare Theatre if the work of our best men is pilloried by the common hangman? It is positively an indecency to talk about a National Theatre in the face of these repeated insults to the intellect of England. A Union of writers should be formed to force Parliament to take action, to appeal in the name of English men of letters to the King—to free the country from the index of this puerile oppression. It is useless to cry *Quousque tandem!* Knighted theatrical managers will not help. Only the collective action of writers and the public will serve to break down the national scandal of our theatrical censorship.

S. O.

# Books of the Month

## ART

THE WORK OF HENRY OSPOVAT: with an Appreciation by OLIVER ONIONS. The Saint Catherine Press, Norfolk Street. 21s. net.

Ospovat, who died a few years ago, not long after his thirtieth year, was known to many as an illustrator of Browning and Matthew Arnold: it was obvious to all who saw the books that he gave to these drawings a thoughtfulness and a permanent force which during the last twenty years had been almost exterminated by the technical facilities of reproduction. But only to a very small circle of friends was known his strong and a little mysterious personality. After his death there was an incomplete show; the British Museum bought two of his least interesting drawings, and he acquired some fame for his caricatures. These, even when they entirely fail to suggest the original, have an amazing vitality of their own—(Caruso almost bursts into song, and we think regretfully of the gramophone, which is all that America has left of him). But they are not really important, and probably for that reason the halfpenny public will label Ospovat a caricaturist. His real strength is revealed by the reproduction of the "Portrait of a Musician," and many other studies. The Musician seems to brood for ever in a corner of that country across whose uplands Rembrandt's Polish Rider for ever tramps into the night. After this finely produced book with its many reproductions, and after Mr. Onion's essay, itself a fine portrait in another art instead of the usual chronicle of impertinences, we know Ospovat's strength, his power of expressing in passionate masses, and with a reticence rare in his race, a deep and sombre contemplation of life.

THE BOOK OF BRIDGES. By EDMÉ ARCAMBEAU; with eighteen illustrations in colour by JESSIE M. KING. Gowan and Gray. 12s. 6d. net.

Miss Jessie King's delicate book decorations had a particular beauty when they were appropriate to the book. She would throw fairy cobwebs to entangle floating flowers and ring ghostly cavaliers in nooses of the finest gossamer. In another little book of hers, studies of buds, branches and flowers, in the same exquisitely fine line, she showed that it could be suited to strong drawing as well as to fanciful decoration. The drawings, admirably reproduced in the present volume, are in a new and very delightful medium, tracery of pencil lines and thin washes of simple colour on a surface like ivory: they seem particularly suitable to the clear atmosphere of the Seine and its bridges.

We cannot say the same about M. Arcambeau's prose, which seems

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to require severe embankment. It is easy, however, to let it flow by unnoticed and give all our attention to Miss Jessie King's bridges, which span it eighteen times.

### ESSAYS AND GENERAL LITERATURE

THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND, by Prof. A. F. POLLARD; CANADA, by A. G. BRADLEY; LANDMARKS IN FRENCH LITERATURE, by G. L. STRACHEY; CLIMATE AND WEATHER, by Prof. H. N. DICKSON; PEOPLES AND PROBLEMS OF INDIA, by Sir T. W. HOLDERNESS; THE SCHOOL, by Prof. J. J. FINDLAY; ARCHITECTURE, by Prof. W. R. LETHABY; THE PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY, by BERTRAND RUSSELL; ANTHROPOLOGY, by R. R. MARETT; ROME, by W. WARDE FOWLER. Home University Library. Williams & Norgate. 1s. net. each.

We have received these ten new volumes of the so-called Home University Library, and there seems to be a freshness and excellence about them which deserves the highest praise. They are not the ordinary manual which some of us at school had the narrowest escape of reading, the deadly compendium of "the second-rate at second-hand." They are all stimulating and original, and not of only educational value: for in any science, but especially in such a new science as Anthropology, the mere statement of aims and methods and the simplification of results is a work that can only be done by the best men in the field, of greater scientific importance than many laborious accumulations of detail. Mr. Marett's "Anthropology" is clearly and strongly reasoned, written with wisdom and vigour, and illustrated with delightful records of personal adventure. Mr. Strachey's "Landmarks of French Literature" is no mere summary of the ordinary histories, but a clear essay tracing the connection from the Chansons de Geste to Verlaine. It is a pity that living authors are excluded, but the limitation is perhaps inevitable. Mr. Strachey is a eulogist, and overpraises, for instance, Pascal: but this praise seldom loses character: he is at his best in the study of such an essentially French poet as Racine; and aptly points out the defect of Victor Hugo—that his tremendous genius had nothing to express but the soul of an ordinary man. Mr. Warde Fowler brings all his charm to the essay on the history and genius of Rome, and the last chapter of the book, dealing with the empire, is a masterly compression, never (as is the way of compressions) suffering from stylistic cramp, but fresh and illuminating. We have every reason to believe that the other volumes are worthy of the three we have examined. But we still think (as we remarked some time ago when noticing Mr. John Masefield's Shakespeare) that the binding and title pages of the series are remarkably ugly.

OSCAR WILDE: A CRITICAL STUDY. BY ARTHUR RANSOME. Martin Secker. 7s. 6d. net.

Mr. Ransome has written with firmness, frankness and good taste. He is a critic with high ideals for criticism and each volume that issues

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from his pen certainly shows him nearer to their attainment. True criticism, he holds, is in itself a fine art, and we take him to mean that it is of less importance for the critic to give just judgments than for him to create an atmosphere in which through the treatment of a certain subject truth shines forth. This is certainly a feature of criticism of the best sort, and yet the way to obtain it may be to aim at the just appraisements first. If Mr. Ransome's appraisements are anywhere at fault, it is perhaps because of the tendency he has to over-value the impressions in which art commences, a tendency which of course he shares with the subject of his monograph. Wilde's æsthetic paradoxes were the logical complement to Ruskin's sermonising extremes, a strange retribution, calculated to restore to its level the balance which the great Victorian tilted. Indeed, the career of Oscar Wilde exhibits in sum the closeness of the interdependence of life and art, failing because it divorced them. Mr. Ransome does not sufficiently acknowledge or recognise this, but he has much to say that is illuminating and finely thought. Wilde's folly and vanity make his character a fatiguing study; Mr. Ransome's treatment is an aid to sympathy and a better understanding.

THE DANCE OF THE MONTHS. By EDEN PHILLPOTTS. Gowans & Gray. 12s. 6d. net.

The name of Eden Phillpotts and Dartmoor have come to be regarded as synonymous; to the former many owe their first inexplicable delight in wandering over this glorious expanse, from those who travel by charabancs to those who visit it as it should be visited—on foot. As a charming record of this region of silent solitude, an exquisite fantasy in prose and verse, illustration charged with atmospherical effect, it has no equal, and one in a sense regrets to find that the edition is limited to a thousand copies. The majority know Dartmoor in Summer only, when it least displays its varied charm, but Mr. Eden Phillpotts discloses in language eloquent with feeling the wild magnificence of the moor at all seasons. With the genesis of Dartmoor Mr. Eden Phillpotts is not troubled, but like a true artist he accepts it as it is—a far-flung plane of ever-changing effects and atmosphere—from which no one can go without sense increased and sympathies sharpened.

IMAGINARY SPEECHES, AND OTHER PARODIES IN PROSE AND VERSE. By JACK COLLINGS SQUIRE. Stephen Swift & Co. 3s. 6d. net.

Mr. Squire has many of the qualities which go to make a fine parodist—a keen insight into small peculiarities, a light touch in handling his material, a pleasing versatility, and the ability to struggle against that besetting sin of the parodist, which is to “dust away at his bells” too boisterously, and cadge for laughter with cheap exaggeration. It is a pity, therefore, that he does not keep all his work up to the standard of his best. The series of articles called “The Practical Journalist,” for instance, begins with an admirable

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parody of a non-committal leading article, and contains a model "column for housewives" that is not bad; but the models of artistic and musical criticism are merely silly. The imaginary speeches, too, which begin the volume are very unequal in quality. There is a pleasant irony in the parodies of Lord Rosebery's "judicious-consistent" style and Mr. Lloyd George's "sucking dove style inside the House"; the speeches of Mr. Ure and Mr. F. E. Smith are too forced, while the imaginary introduction by Mr. Balfour of a budget providing for the fifty per cent. taxation of land values is a perfect gem of parody, only equalled in this book by the mischievous fun which is poked at Mr. Belloc's "descriptive peregrinatory" style at the beginning of "modern prose writers"—a series which maintains a consistently high level of humour. Mr. Squire's verse parodies are excellent, for they would take in the fools and make the wise men laugh.

### FICTION

#### READING THE STARS

THE SHADOW OF POWER. By PAUL BERTRAM. 6s.

HECTOR GRAEME. By EVELYN BRENTWOOD. 6s.

THE STORY OF A PLOUGHBOY. By JAMES BRYCE. 6s.

THE PAGAN TRINITY. By BEATRICE IRWIN. 5s. *net*.

London: John Lane.

We recall a literary four-in-hand, whose team once caracoled and carolled from the Bodley Head along the road of reputation. We also remember Mr. Lascelles Abercrombie was one of the wheelers on that occasion. He is no longer driven even tandem; he no longer needs the whip of advertisement, and is well able to carry Apollo on his back across country in a poetic point-to-point.

Now we have "four new stars" twinkling in the little amaranthine space that broods on Vigo Street: maybe Mr. John Lane's eyes twinkled when, in a Pickwickian sense, bruised by the manuscripts, he first saw stars. Cork Street may have stared with a wild surmise, and many must have stood silent upon a step in Savile Row, when these four planets sailed into print. "Hector Graeme" is not likely to trouble seriously Sir Robert Ball's "Popular Guide to the Heavens." It is more of a maroon than a star. It lacks form and is very noisy. Yet there is something in "Hector Graeme" which thrilled Mr. John Lane and may easily thrill many readers; after all, a really good bang is always worth hearing. The writing is execrable, however, and we fail to detect promise of more than successful sensationalism. This star is a shooting star, attracting a momentary attention.

"The Shadow of Power" is mostly blood and shadows. There is plenty of good honest painstaking history without tears, and promise of better things. On the whole, "The Shadow of Power" was worth writing, and for those who want blood and shadows worth reading.

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"The Story of a Ploughboy" is more like a celestial phenomenon. In so far as it is sincere, it has value. But the prose is muddled, the incidents are not carefully chosen and the first hundred pages are merely an unpleasant repetition of a hackneyed theme. We hesitate to acclaim "The Story of a Ploughboy" as a work of promise: something more than anxiety to take the world into one's confidence is necessary for the production of works of art. We enjoy slices of life; but we like our food well cooked and do not disdain the condiments of literary form. However, "The Story of a Ploughboy" is worth more than either of the other two novels mentioned, and Mr. Bryce may be heard of again.

We read that many of the poems contained in "The Pagan Trinity" were recited at an American theatre. This information is not surprising. Quotations will serve instead of comment:—

"His dancing girl  
Whose arabesquing body stirs and frets  
The champing senses, with its swish and swirl!"

We should have preferred two or three more notes of exclamation.

"With mystic moom, and mantram slow,  
Deep mercies germinate your song,  
And broken pilgrims, bending low,  
Cry 'Namu Amida!' . . . 'Moon and Gong!'"

These two extracts, helped out with footnotes in the collected work, will serve to represent Miss Beatrice Irwin.

The "Four New Stars" were not worth it. Next time, Mr. John Lane, make it "four fresh starts."

WAYWARD FEET. By A. R. GORING THOMAS. John Lane. 6s.

Apart from the odd arrangement of these two short stories with unrelated books and parts and interludes that muddle the reader unnecessarily, there is much to charm and move in this new volume by the author of "The Lass with the Delicate Air." A quaint and graceful individuality inspires the manner of narration, and poignancy in the matter makes the manner truly worth while. We look for some good *contes* from Mr. Goring Thomas.

DORINDA'S BIRTHDAY. By CHARLES LEE. Dent & Sons. 3s. 6d.

Mr. Charles Lee is one of the very few people who can write about Cornwall without setting the teeth of a Cornishman on edge. So much is heard nowadays of the Celtic temperament, of cream, saffron buns and pasties, that these four excellent things are in danger of becoming "precious." Mr. Lee writes of the Duchy and its folk with such comprehension and restraint that it is all the sadder to find him also falling on one page of this book into the cream-and-bun snare, but apart from that lapse and a less great certainty of the niceties of dialect than he displayed in "The Widow Woman," the present volume is undoubtedly an achievement. These are rustics to whom Mr. Lee introduces us, though rustics whom the fashion of his introduction endows with a smack of the grand manner. Their speech and actions

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are of the simplest; but Mr. Lee, in adopting the *rôle* of showman, as when he begins a chapter with the phrase, "Reluctantly loosing my hold for the moment on Dorinda's skirts, I invite you to accompany me through the crowd in search of Hubert," makes of his book less a rustic vignette than a study in *genre*. As such it is very successful, and, treating as it does of one day in a girl's life—that fateful day of "putting up her hair"—it is kept, without jar or apparent effort, in one key. The description of Dorinda when she bursts in on her admiring friends in her new finery is a good example of the euphuistic method employed by Mr. Lee. "The excitement of the moment had slightly disturbed her breathing; and with each soft pant a mysterious inward cheeping was audible, as though, like Lesbia, she cherished a happy sparrow in her bosom." . . . Was the fact of a girl wearing stays ever more delightfully conveyed? Mr. Lee's sense, usually so true, of the speech suitable to his characters, fails him somewhat in the scene where Dorinda and Hubert are riding on the merry-go-round. "Dear girl!" says he, leaning towards her—in response she breathes "Dear boy!" which has a tang not of their class or county. The book, as is fitting with the lightness of the theme, ends on a tentative note, leaving the new Dorinda, whom her birthday has called into being, still only on the threshold of thought and anticipation.

DEAD MEN'S BELLS: A ROMANCE. By FREDERICK NIVEN. Martin Secker. 6s.

There is no reason why novelists should not go on telling stories about pirates till the last reading public calls for its last yarn; but on the other hand there is no reason why they should. At the same time the tale of adventure, be adventure and adventurer what they may, kindles a glow in the breasts of most of us; it would seem to call up to consciousness life's unending warfare, the struggle which we all know and which is finally the sanction of our being. Mr. Frederick Niven knows the inner meaning of this high battling, and even when the buccaneers of his heart's delight indulge in the blood-and-thunder pranks of the histories which charmed our youth, they do so, as it were, symbolically, revealing not only the mere adventure, but man the adventurer whetting the edge of character on the hone of life. "Dead Men's Bells" tells of such doings after the manner, rather too much after the manner, of the same author's "The Island Providence," although there are notable differences of place and incident. But these adventures are only pretexts for the display of Mr. Niven's keen and exacting literary sense. His pirates not only move through the purple heather of the Highlands, they move through the equally effective purple patches of Mr. Niven's prose. Rarely do we come across such finely wrought descriptive passages as are to be found in this book; and there is humour as well, and some quaint moralising. But the master-stroke of "Dead Men's Bells" is undoubtedly the opening description of Robert Lindsay's home life at Wester Mearns; indeed, the

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picture of this eighteenth century Scottish farmstead with its overwhelming womenfolk is little short of masterly. The "cruel speech and mean silences" of Wester Mearns are unforgettable, and the subtlety of their revelation must earn for Mr. Niven the recognition he deserves. The weakness of "Dead Men's Bells" lies in its indeterminate conclusion; every page has its literary delight, but as a story the book is disappointing. Since Mr. Niven calls his book a romance, he might at least have given his hero romantic justice by letting him arrive at his goal. As it is, "Dead Men's Bells" tails off without appearing to finish, thus being robbed of the chance of combining good story-telling with fine writing.

MORE GHOST STORIES OF AN ANTIQUARY. By MONTAGUE RHODES JAMES, Litt.D. Arnold. 6s.

"What he touched was, according to his account, a mouth, with teeth, and with hair about it, and, he declares, not the mouth of a human being." A disagreeable sensation, but described with sufficient actuality! Dr. James, the Provost of King's College, Cambridge, believes in the horrible, or rather, he has the skill to compel his readers to believe in it. A ghost story, in his view, should be a real ghost story. He will have none of your ingenious-mechanical ghosts; no occult, mediumistic ghosts; no Maskelyne and Devant or attenuated Beyond-the-Border-message spirit, but the actual thing, the demonic thing, evil, sulphurous, only to be laid by bell, book and candle, or the full ritual of magic.

HIERONYMUS RIDES. By ANNA COLEMAN LADD. Macmillan. 6s.

We must confess to a feeling of distinct uneasiness when a novel opens thus: "In the name of my Lord God, I, Martin Sulezman, chaplain to his Majesty, the Emperor Maximilian, begin this book." It is the feeling that we are in for some superior "tushery." This feeling is not belied in the chronicle of those adventures which befell the hero called indifferently Hierome and Hieronymus, the Bastard of Cologne, whose grandfather was an alchemist and whose father was an Emperor. There are certainly adventures enough in these pages. Hieronymus roams all over the world, now risking his life on court errands, now posing as a hermit in the woods; now jousting as a knight, now railling as the Emperor's fool. He charms a courtesan of medieval Venice with his singing, does wonders of battle in the Holy Land and Spain, falls in love with the Duchess Mary, Prince Max's wife, marries a gipsy, and finally receives a stiletto in his heart which was meant for the Emperor. The author has certainly taken plenty of trouble with her history and her local colour. The epigraphs to the chapter are all from medieval sources. And yet the effect of the whole is unreal. It is perfectly easy to say why. To relate a medieval story in the manner of a medieval chronicler is difficult, but if well done it is convincing. To be frankly and generously romantic, like Victor Hugo in "Notre Dame de

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Paris," is another way of producing conviction with medieval matter. But to use the stilted form of a medieval narrator and give him the observing, sensitive mind of a romanticist is a certain way of courting failure.

THE COWARD. By ROBERT HUGH BENSON. Hutchinson. 6s.

Father Benson is always clever in narrative and description, ingenious in argument, and skilful in the setting forth of a plot. Sometimes he has been much more than that, and has united a realistic portrayal of characters to a highly imaginative and mystical theme. In this case too his skill does not desert him, but the nature of the task he has set himself is inconsistent with a real success in fiction. He is concerned with a hypothetical ethical case, the moral defect of cowardice—not the quality of cowardice as one among many qualities of a human being, but as the predominant feature, isolated from other qualities. Valentine Medd, the coward of this book, has no interest for Father Benson except in so far as he is a physical coward. The result is that he is a mere logical monster, as unreal as Quilp or Bluebeard without being picturesque or pleasingly grotesque. He is a mere case for discussion, a peg upon which the author hangs his argument about the nervous defect from which cowardice springs, and the capacity of the will to overcome it and to develop a habit of courage.

## HISTORY AND TRAVEL

RUINS OF DESERT CATHAY: PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF EXPLORATIONS IN CENTRAL ASIA AND WESTERNMOST CHINA. By M. AUREL STEIN. With numerous illustrations, etc. Two vols. Macmillan. 42s. net.

It is impossible at present to estimate the full importance of Mr. Stein's archæological finds in the great desert regions of Chinese Turkestan. The rolls of ancient manuscripts which he has brought home, the beautiful frescoes and silk paintings, some of which are illustrated in these volumes and belong apparently to the best period of classical Buddhistic art, still await searching examination in the hands of experts. The country, the archæological wealth of which he has sampled by repeated excavations, is a vast tract, mostly desert, extending for twelve hundred miles from East to West, lying to the North of the vast mountain systems of Kashmir and Northern Tibet. It lies, that is to say, between Afghanistan and the Pamirs on the West, and the ruins of the Great Wall of China, once an effective barricade against the Huns, on the East. It is surmised that during the last thousand years the atmosphere and soil of this region has been exhausted of moisture; that in the early centuries of the Christian era much land that is now wholly barren and uninhabitable

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was not only occupied, but was the home of an advanced civilisation, the ruins of which have been preserved in the desiccated climate. It was the meeting ground of travellers from China on the East, India and Tibet on the South, and Christian-Hellenic Asia on the West. Its civilisation was the "joint product of Indian, Chinese, and classical influences."

Mr. Stein has reserved for a later book, which may not appear for several years, a complete technical account of his archaeological and geographical discoveries. Of these he gives here a preliminary account, along with the story of his wanderings during a two-and-a-half years exile. He had made an earlier exploring expedition in these regions in 1900-1901, and had excavated some of the ruins near Khotan. Later, when Inspector-General of Education on the North-West Frontier, he submitted to the Indian Government plans for a more extended expedition, and set off in the Spring of 1906 backed both by the Government and the British Museum; he returned to India in the Autumn of 1908. By the permission of the Amir he was enabled to enter Turkestan by way of Afghanistan, near the glacial sources of the Oxus. His way took him across the vast mountain systems of the frontier-land, by way of Kashgar and Yarkand to Khotan, and thence eastward across the Takla Makan Desert. His time was occupied during the Spring, Autumn and Summer seasons in passing from one ruined site to another; the Summers saw him exploring, surveying and mapping the unknown mountain regions of the Kun-lun and Nan-shan ranges. Sometimes he found himself on the tracks of Marco Polo. Again and again he followed the route of the seventh century pilgrim, Hsüan-tsang, his "Chinese patron saint," whose name is still venerated by the Buddhist priests.

It is to be put down, indeed, to the direct interposition of this saint that Mr. Stein was enabled to bring away his richest treasures. The ancient cave-temples of the "Thousand Buddhas" are still jealously guarded by an ignorant and pious priest, Wang Tao-shih. Wang had doubtless heard of Mr. Stein's inexplicable penchant for old and useless manuscripts, and took the precaution of walling in a recess which was "crammed full to the roof with manuscript bundles." But when one or two rolls which he lent to the author turned out to be nothing less than Chinese versions of Buddhist texts translated by the adorable Hsüan-tsang himself, the chance could only be attributed to divine intervention. Under the influence of friendly persuasion, gifts, and religion, Wang at length transferred the contents of this obscure museum to the tent of the diplomatic traveller.

But most of Mr. Stein's finds were the results of digging after long and arduous journeys over the desert. Buried among the ruins of Lopnor, amid parched, wind-eroded clay one hundred miles from water, were found ancient pile carpets, silk fabrics, and Græco-Buddhistic wood-carvings. At Miran some beautifully coloured

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frescoes representing winged angels, clearly of semi-Hellenic origin, were safely dislodged, packed, and ultimately transferred to the British Museum. The value of these art remains and manuscripts has yet to be tested, but the probability is that the treasure discovered and brought away by Mr. Stein will constitute a record as the find of one man in a single expedition. The long story, plainly set forth, of ten thousand miles of travel, affords fascinating reading as a tale of adventure, geographical exploration, and a romantic unveiling of ancient history.

THE FULL RECOGNITION OF JAPAN. By ROBERT P. PORTER. Henry Frowde, Oxford University Press. 10s. 6d. net.

The name of the book itself tells its contents. The author discusses about Japan as she has been lately recognised by all the other Powers, or may I say as Japan ought to be recognised by the world. For it is a comparatively small number of the foreigners who have really recognised Japan as the author himself has done. Indeed, notwithstanding of our alliance, I so often meet the English people who ask me most astonishing questions about my country. Many English are absolutely ignorant of their allied country in the Far East. I am very grateful to the author, not only as he recognises everything of Japan thoroughly, but because he has published this splendid book, which will give light on Japan to many English as well as other Westerners. There are forty-nine chapters. Mr. Porter deals with all sorts of questions—History, Art, Literature, Trades, Navy and Army, Public Works and everything. It is almost like the Encyclopædia of Japan (only abridged).

The author is always very sympathetic, as well as optimistic, to Japan. The first chapter seemed to me almost too flattering. I wondered if any English, who had never been in Japan and read that chapter, might easily over-value our country. For, if one doesn't see our country, he would imagine the rest part (which Mr. Porter left unwritten) is exactly like that of England. But, it must be remembered, the foundations of the two countries are not on the same level. However, Mr. Porter has very sound mind, like the regular John Bull. So, if the reader goes through the book he can imagine the modern Japan quite well. Accounts, such as the trade, population, and the progressing state of the towns, just at the present date, are very graphic; and even of Art, Literature, Drama, he must have the knowledge thoroughly, and he puts in some old histories in a very sensible way so that the reader can grasp the past life of Japan easily. But in the chapter of "Literature" Mr. Porter mentioned the name of Bakiu only once as . . . "what has deterred or horrified translators." I feel quite sad to note that. In fact, Bakiu was as great as Rai San Yo. Instead of getting into that Chinese classic style which was too difficult for women and many uneducated people, he has written novels with easiest language, yet at the same time keeping the high Bushido spirit as much as Rai San Yo. Indeed Bakiu has sowed the seed of the late Revolution to the nation on even wider

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scale than Rai San Yo did with his Gaishi. However the other parts of the book are true.

I hope this book will be read by the English public widely so that you shall have "full recognition" upon your allied country.

YOSHIO MARKINO.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE SCOTTISH PEOPLE. By DONALD MACMILLAN, M.A., D.D. Hodder & Stoughton. 7s. 6d. net.

When the nature of an author's work is clearly stated in the preface, one is perforce bound to consider whether the pretensions of such preface have been fulfilled. As a study of the evolution of the Scottish nation, the work singularly fails; as a clear concise narration of events presented in an eminently readable manner, it deserves commendation. "The languid students of our present age" owe a debt of gratitude for the presentation of matter in the main of a dry as dust character, here set forth in a style—albeit in places inclined to scrappiness—that is bound to hold the attention. Ignoring certain deductions which Dr. Macmillan cannot seriously wish the readers to accept *per se*, the attribution of the permanent wealth of the country to the booty gained after the Battle of Bannockburn, the work should appeal to readers who, having neither time nor inclination to peruse the larger works of Mr. Hume Brown and Mr. Andrew Lang, are not satisfied with the ordinary text books. By far the greater part of the work is devoted to the period prior to 1745—a period of continuous feuds and frictions, only eleven pages being devoted to what the author describes as Modern Scotland, 1745-1843, the period in which Scotland commenced to put its house in order. The work would have gained as a study in evolution, by the limitation of space devoted to the earlier period, so that the real evolutionary period might have received more complete consideration. One is surprised, if not indeed indignant, to find two of Scotland's greatest men—Scott and Burns—in a history of the Scottish people, summarily dismissed by the mere mention of their names, whereas pages are devoted to dissertations on James the First. As a portrayal of character, traditions and customs, it is singularly deficient. Scotland, possibly more than any other country, possesses national peculiarities which make records of the past doubly interesting, but of such peculiarities one learns nothing from this work.

## POETRY

FIRES: BOOK I. THE STOVE, AND OTHER TALES. By WILFRID WILSON GIBSON. Elkin Mathews. 1s. net.

Mr. Gibson's poetic method—made clear enough in three successive small volumes entitled *Daily Bread*, Books 1, 2 and 3; made clear without need of preface, and now but emphasised by this new fascicule

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

of "tales"—raises, as all true and original work always will, one or two difficult questions. He indicates the nature of his themes in a short and very beautiful prelude. Seated in his easy chair, he stirs the fire to a flame, and in the flame flicker all fancies dear to poets; for instance:—

Troy, the ever-burning;  
Shelley's lustral pyre;  
Dragon-eyes unsleeping;  
Witches' cauldrons leaping;  
Golden galleys sweeping  
Out from sea-walled Tyre. . . .

Until dazzled by them (says he):—

I shut my eyes to heat and light;  
And saw, in sudden night,  
Crouched in the dripping dark  
With steaming shoulders stark,  
The man who hews the coal to feed my fire.

It is of this man and of his like that Mr. Gibson sings: and the aim of his method is severely to cut away inappropriate ornament and get down to the bare buff befitting the theme. Now this, of course, is what Wordsworth preached; but even the greatest pioneers go astray, and even the great Wordsworth went astray after theories of poetic diction. Newman has a just passage on the reverence we owe to men who open new countries in literature and cross them before roads are made communicating between place and place: but it remains true that Wordsworth's simplicity is unhappy when "done in defiance" to exhibit a theory and happy only when it consents with that unconscious Homeric simplicity, which (as Pater noted) makes a picture in the great style, though it be describing in a few bare words how a gang of sailors haul a boat down the beach.

Mr. Gibson's diction, though economical, is never cheap, and is always poetical. He gets his severe effects by cutting down to the hard outline of a story. His "tales" are all real tales; and the question raised by such tales as "The Wife," "The Shop," "The Brothers," "The Blind Rower," "Flannan Isle"—indeed by every one in this volume—is a difficult and interesting one for all artists in words. Of none of these stories can you say that its like has not been told, in our time, admirably in prose—English, French or Russian. Of none can you say that it is not here told admirably in verse. When we take (say) "Flannan Isle" with its concluding stanza—good as an old ballad's—

"We seemed to stand for an endless while,  
Though still no word was said,  
Three men alive on Flannan Isle  
Who thought as three men dead,"

we vote for verse with its higher capacity of emotion and its special capacity for memorising it by a stroke of rime. On the other hand—to be just—prose seems the better method for preliminaries, for unfolding the story and making it credible. It appears in short to be a toss-up between the values of Evidence (prose) and Emotion (poetry). To put

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it in another way, if Mr. Gibson's "The Shop" is rightly cast into verse, should Daudet's *Les Vieux* have been written in prose? There is no ground more debateable between the two, and hitherto prose has held (against occasional challenges) the nine points of the law. The law can hardly be revised on a stronger appeal than that made by Mr. Gibson's work.

THE DIVINA COMMEDIA OF DANTE ALIGHIERI. Literally translated into English verse in the hendecasyllabic measure of the Original Italian. By the RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR SAMUEL WALKER GRIFFITH, G.C.M.G. Henry Frowde. 6s. net.

Sir Samuel Walker, who has found leisure from his labours as Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia to complete such an exacting task as the translation of the Divina Commedia, speaks so modestly of his work in the preface that it seems almost ungracious to criticise it. This translation, as he says, is an experiment in the application of certain principles. A translation, in his view, should above all be literal: further, in the case of a poem the original rhythm must be reproduced. "The cadence should be such that, as he reads, the reader may fancy that he hears the original." Sir Samuel Walker has therefore omitted rhyme as unessential and rendered Dante's poem in Dante's own metre, at the same time adhering as far as possible to the order of Dante's words and translating them with the utmost degree of exactness. We can certainly congratulate the author on a high degree of success in applying his principles. He has given a very faithful and not unpoetic translation. At the same time, we cannot pretend to think that the effect produced is at all comparable to that of Dante's magical cadence. The principle leads to an excessive inversion of clauses and sentences, which, possible in Dante's synthetic tongue, is wholly unsuited to our analytic language, that seems to be walking on stilts when it is so treated.

"But when that I the foot of a hill had come to" is a line in which no poet could take pleasure. "Yon mount delectable why not ascendest?" is equally distressing. These, indeed, are extreme cases, but they show whither rigid principles of translation lead. Surely the best translation of a poet is by a poet, even if the metre is changed, and paraphrase is often used. Those who do not know the original language—and it is they for whom a translation is primarily intended—cannot imagine they are "hearing the original," whatever the metre be that is used, with any conviction that their imagination corresponds to reality. It follows that any version which itself produces a great poetic effect is preferable to a prosaic version *on principle*, however admirable it may be. With the highest sense, therefore, of Sir Samuel Griffith's success in making a really good literal translation in metre, we cannot accept his principle as the true one. Read by itself his version gives little idea of Dante's

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greatness. For comparison we quote a passage, with the original from the Francesca episode—

Amor, che al cor gentil ratto s'apprende,  
Prese costui della bella persona  
Che mi fu tolta, e il modo ancor m'offende.  
Amor, che a nullo amato amar perdona,  
Mi prese di costui piacer si forte,  
Che, come vedi, ancor non m'abbandona.  
Amor condusse noi ad una morte . . . .

Love, who on gentle breast hold quickly catches,  
Caught him beside me by the form of beauty  
They snatched from me : and still the way torments me.  
Love, who to none beloved gives grace from loving,  
Caught me by the delight of him, so mighty  
That, as thou seest, he still doth not forsake me.  
Love led us to a single death together.

DICHTUNG UND DICHTER DER ZEIT : EINE SCHILDERUNG DER DEUTSCHEN  
LITERATUR DER LETZTEN JAHRZEHNTE VON ALBERT SOERGEL.  
Leipzig, Voigtländer. London : Williams & Norgate. 12s. 6d.

This volume in the encyclopædic elaboration of its 900 pages is typical of the German method and of the German mind. Its aim is to portray the modern Teutonic literary movement, and it effects its object by docketing more or less efficiently under their various headings and schools the five or six hundred novelists, poets, poetasters, dramatists and litterateurs who have together constituted the Teutonic culture of the day. And with commendable thoroughness Herr Soergel provides us with descriptions, portraits and biographies, not only of the actual modern Germans themselves but of the chief foreign writers of the past and present generations by whom they were inspired. Thus we are given, inter alia, synopses of the lives, writings and meanings of such diverse portents as D'Annunzio, Zola, Tolstoi, Balzac, the Goncourts, Strindberg, and Walt Whitman.

If, however, Herr Soergel is conscientious and competent, he is never brilliant. He lacks the architectonic touch necessary to handle European culture. The reader cannot help thinking with regret how grandly but how differently Taine would have treated so splendid a subject matter. And for a Gallic delicacy of style we are given a Teutonic heaviness which is all the more ponderous when it essays agility. The following passage is typical of Herr Soergel at his smartest :—"Oscar Wilde and Bernard Shaw, both lovers of paradoxes, of which the one Oscar Wilde is England's greatest modern stylist, England's unhappiest poet, England's first art-for-art's sake artist ; the other Bernard Shaw, an interesting social critic, a sceptic, to whom—he is an annihilator of the idea of the hero, a hero-killer—all men are poseurs, a dazzlingly witty sparkling jester, who spares not even himself." Yet quite independently of Herr

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Soergel's amiable criticism, the quotations are so numerous, and the reproductions of the photographs, portraits, book-plates, illustrations, and caricatures so excellent, that the reader cannot help being brought into direct touch with all that is best, all that is worst, all that is most characteristic in modern German literature.

And indeed one cannot but be impressed by the multifarious intensity of its intellectual and aesthetic life. Temperaments are taken with a seriousness unknown to our English stolidity. There is a positive glut in that essentially non-English article the *Weltanschauung*. Nearly every author subscribes to, if indeed he cannot invent, some movement. And every movement has its organ. The clue to the general situation is the merging of that Zolaesque naturalism which was the original source of modern German literature into almost innumerable tributaries. New Romanticism is the catchword of this new development. Yet scarcely any label is wide enough to cover that splendid welter of realism, psychology, aestheticism, mysticism, sex and ethics. For every taste is well catered for. The over-sexed will accordingly find congenial reading in Marie Madeleine (the Victoria Cross of modern German verse), ethical socialists in Hart and Wille, aesthetes in Stefan Georg, mystics in Mombert and Evers, dilettanti in Bierbaum, and unusually refined decadents in Prezsbyszewski. Those again who prefer their sex, their ethics, and their art all together instead of separated will find what they wish in Wedekind, an ingenious author who combines many of the essential features of Mr. Shaw and Mr. Crowley (if such a collocation can be used without giving offence to either of those gentlemen, or indeed to Wedekind himself).

If, however, we leave these somewhat random examples out of the several hundreds at our disposal, to fix on what is most representative in ultra-modern Teutonic culture, we would mention specifically the chastened romanticism of Hugo von Hoffmansthal, the cold psychological realism of Thomas Mann and the almost satyric exuberance of his brother Heinrich, the plays of Schnitzler and the verse of Dehmel. Dehmel in particular with his doctrine and his practice of Art as the expression of the individual represents the great Nietzschean principle of self-affirmation. It may be said finally that while a book such as Lublinski's "*Ausgang der Moderne*" gives a far better synoptic view of modern German literature than does the treatise before us, Herr Soergel's compendium none the less constitutes an ideal work of reference.

THE SEVEN AGAINST THEBES OF AESCHYLUS. Rendered into English verse by EDWYN BEVAN. Arnold. 2s. net.

We can recommend this translation to anyone not familiar with the original who, fresh from Reinhardt, wishes to continue the history of the doomed house of Laius; he will be able at the same time to compare the dramatic methods of Aeschylus with what he has been allowed to see of Sophocles. The play deals with the strife of

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Eteocles and Polyneices, sons of Oedipus, after his death, and closes with the wonderful dirge over their bodies of the Sisters Ismene and Antigone: at which point the agelong tragedy may be followed a generation further again in Sophocles' *Antigone*. Mr. Bevan faces the Aeschylean grand style with straightforwardness and simplicity. He writes good blank verse, and keeps close to the Greek, except in the choruses, where he follows the example of Professor Gilbert Murray and skims the contour of the original in a Swinburnian metre.

### SOCIOLOGY

INSPIRED MILLIONAIRES. By GERALD STANLEY LEE. Grant Richards.  
3s. 6d. net.

Millionaires will give their moustaches an upward twist on reading this sumptuous panegyric of their future estate, but lesser men will read it too, hence it is illuminating and suggestive. Mr. Lee's bottom presage is that civilisation will have to recognise the right and power of wealth. "We are going to believe in money soon. We are going to have men that will make us believe in it. It will be a platitude." One's first inclination is to rejoin that men do believe in money—only too much so, gadzooks! But that is not what Mr. Lee means. His gospel is that money will be a part of man's ethical faith, a creed. Capital will be an art form, will no longer be regarded as a meaningless or dead thing. Money will grow eloquent, will take the place of religion, will be a religion. Millionaires will come to realise the value and vanity of wealth, its ethical properties. It will become the fruitful vine of his worship. Norman Angell—and now inspired millionaires. Perhaps the best thing in this really interesting book is the author on the artist contrasted with the millionaire. The one hates and despises the other; they cannot understand one another's trend of mind. They have no respect. The smallest artist looks upon the richest man with supreme contempt, while deep in his heart the richest man respects the humblest artist. All this is good and entertaining. Mr. Lee believes in the future amalgamation of the artist and the millionaire—the latter becoming an artist in money. But how is the amalgamation to take place? Here Mr. Lee is somewhat disappointing; nor does he adduce sufficient reason why they should amalgamate. Marriage might help, and so we hope that every millionaire who has a daughter will see to it that she marries an artist. That would help art if it did not help the millionaire. Mr. Lee's vision is comforting. If it rather upsets Christ's teaching of humility, it does aid one to take a more charitable view of the millionaires who are not (yet) inspired.

THE FUTURE OF ENGLAND. By HON. GEORGE PEEL. Macmillan. 6s. net.

In "The Future of England" Mr. Peel is a co-ordinator of social

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ideas rather than an original sociologist, and only those readers who are unfamiliar with the arguments and ideals of Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb will feel anything like a thrill of novelty whilst reading his by no means uninteresting or unnecessary pages. The essence of Mr. George Peel's social philosophy is the establishment of a minimum of social welfare, based upon a fairer individualisation rather than a completer generalisation of possessions, and by thus "widening what men have," he hopes to "widen men," or, as that last phrase is not without grotesque suggestion, to establish, in his own words again, "wider hopes, and higher aims, and better destinies." Such ideals are common to all reformers and probably all politicians in our time, but even when Mr. Peel forecasts the immediate future he rarely enters upon controversial ground. He is always fair, practical, and prophetically safe. He is convincing because he does not take the risks of the genuine utopist, and he is uninspiring for the same reason. According to Mr. Peel, and no one will dispute with him, the next steps in social evolution will be towards the scientific speeding-up of production and the stimulation of demand, the organisation of industry on sane and healthy lines, involving the decasualisation of labour and full means of conciliation between master and man; the development of State secondary and technical education, and the introduction of larger hygienic measures which shall effectually curtail the social wastage of preventible disease. In short, the creation of what he calls with a fine sense of phrase, "a Plimsoll line of citizenship." He has tried to, as he says, get "into the skin of the labourers," but there is no evidence that he has succeeded. His view of the labourer's needs is always the view of the outside political thinker. He has not even got so far into the skin of the labourer as to understand the significance of and the difference between trade unionism, socialism, and syndicalism, and the immense international importance of these movements. He speaks of trade unionism being jostled by socialism, socialism by syndicalism, and syndicalism by anarchy. But these jostlings are very superficial if they exist at all. Trade unionism and socialism, far from jostling one another, have formed a working alliance for political action, and their ultimate objects are almost identical; syndicalism has also similar aims, but its methods are insurrectionary. And Mr. Peel has missed the meaning of syndicalism if he imagines, as would seem, that this new expression of industrial unrest is merely the awakening of low grade labour. It is far more serious than that. Syndicalism in France is trade unionism pure and simple; it hardly exists in England at present, in spite of the eloquence of Mr. Tom Mann, but where it does find a footing it affects all grades, as in the outbreaks of last August, when railwaymen, dockers, carters, tramwaymen and others all used the syndicalist weapon, the general strike.

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## A REVIEW BY H. BELLOC

EVERY now and then there falls to the reviewer a task impossible of accomplishment : which is the presenting to his public of an heroic piece of work. Were books few, or were they only noticed at length when they were worth noticing, no such apology as this would be needed. But the custom has grown up to notice nearly every book produced and to speak of nearly all in similar terms.

When, therefore, a totally new piece of art appears, taking its place immediately in the highest rank of English letters, the machinery and tradition of reviewing fails in the task of pronouncing upon that work. The penalty we pay for having praised indiscriminately is, that when we need to praise in a particular manner, we have no instrument ready to hand.

Mr. March Phillipps has produced the first complete bit of English prose-writing which we have had

for many years. But see how pale that sentence looks already now it is written and on paper! Were one to say that this is the only book of a modern sort which the reader will, when he has finished it, know to have been written every sentence of it with intention, and the whole of it upon a plan of consecutive thought, it only sounds like the commonplace praise which is chucked by the handful to silly novels written by silly women about their insignificant grievances, or their nondescript theology.

In this essay, "The Works of Man"—which is an appreciation of human life in terms of human architecture—you have a book which will endure permanently in English letters. Its quality is just of that granite sort which one feels that no change of taste, no shifting of standard, will seriously affect.

The nobility of such prose does not consist in its sobriety, as pedants would probably determine, but in that precision of structure which is the necessary, and, as it were, the compulsory effect of sincere intention. That is a rare thing nowadays; and in this book, it is coupled with something much rarer at all times: a sense of words, single and agglomerate; of words in their individual value, in their combined rhythm, and in their power of individual and combined suggestion.

But it is not by excerpts that you can judge such a book as this. It is by the reading of it and the perception of its *stuff* that you discover its true value. I might print and reiterate the fact that all Mr. March Phillipps mentions in "The Works of Man" is something he has seen, whether that something be something Egyptian, something Greek, something Byzantine, or something Gothic. That in itself is a wonderfully real accompaniment of sincerity to-day. Or I might tell my reader that the consecution of the thought is something quite unlike the run of any

other modern work—for of all periods ours is the period in which men are soonest out of breath. Or I might assure those whom I may have persuaded to deal with this volume at once before it grows famous, and to have the first fruits of it, that they will find in the book a leavened and kneaded multiplicity of knowledge which, again, has almost disappeared from our hashed and re-hashed commentaries. But to say all these things would not be to present the book itself.

The history upon which it is based is so individual and strong that there is no end to the criticism it might excite. The point is that it is a *united* theory of history. The whole book is a block of thought emerging with astonishing facility as a piece of united prose.

"The Works of Man" will remain quite untouched by the flux of our time and quite independent of the anarchy of modern opinion. It is absolutely and certainly classic; that is, absolutely and certainly destined to remain as a standard. So strong a judgment sounds fantastically exaggerated perhaps, because modern readers can expect nothing to be great unless they have heard of it very many times, and this book is but just published. Nevertheless, the judgment is sound, and time will prove it true. There is perhaps not a word which, as a vehicle of expression, any critic reading these 300 odd pages could erase or change, and that mixed effect of simplicity and depth which English by rhetoric and straining has nearly lost is here recovered. It is the first modern book in which I have seen it recovered.

The writer of the book, as the reader of this criticism, will, I repeat, wonder whether so considerable a verdict can stand. I leave it without any hesitation to the test of time.

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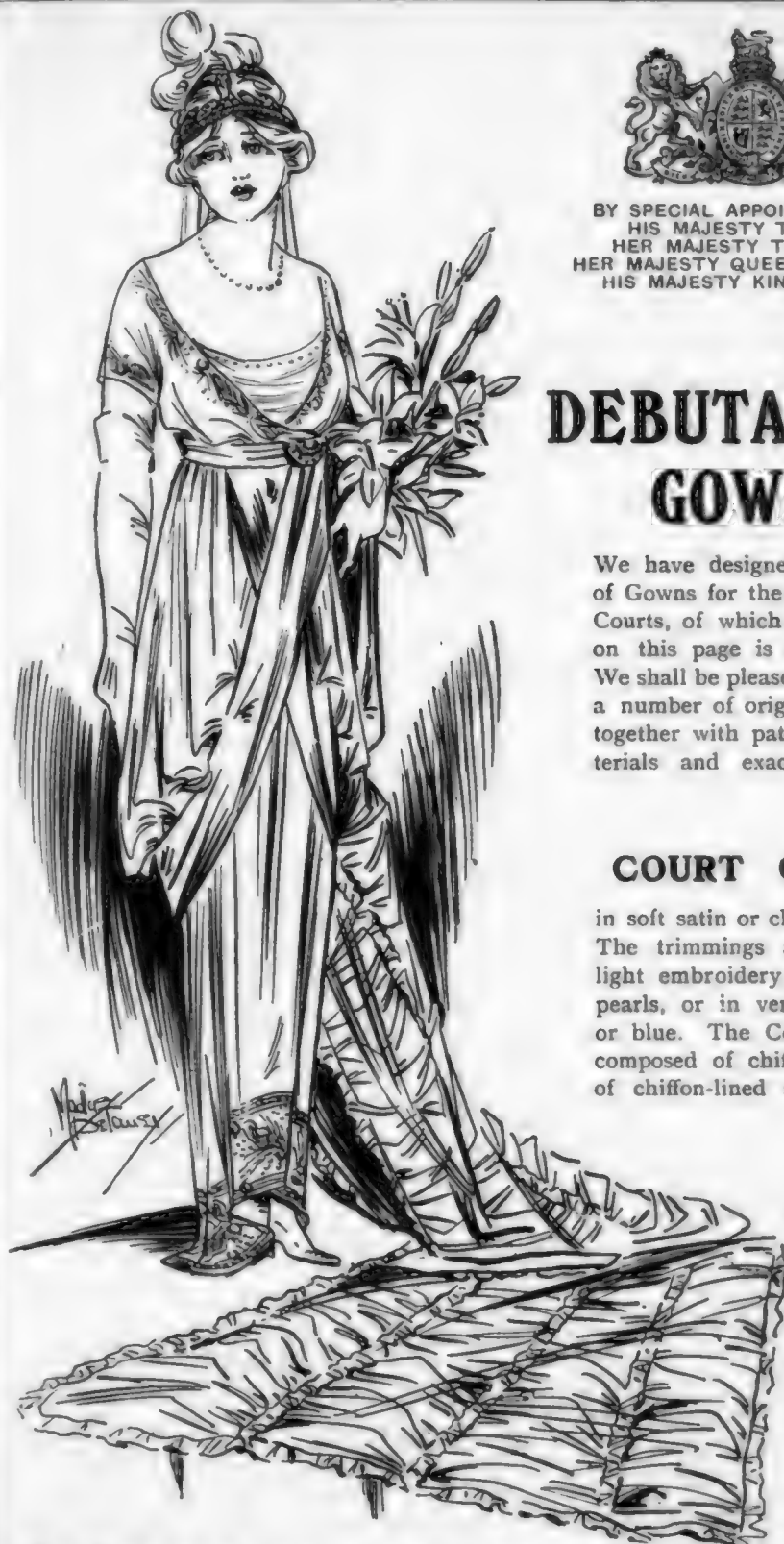
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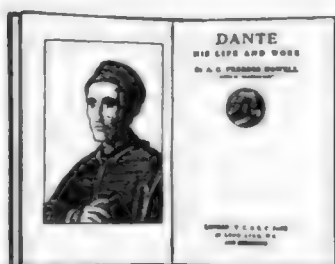
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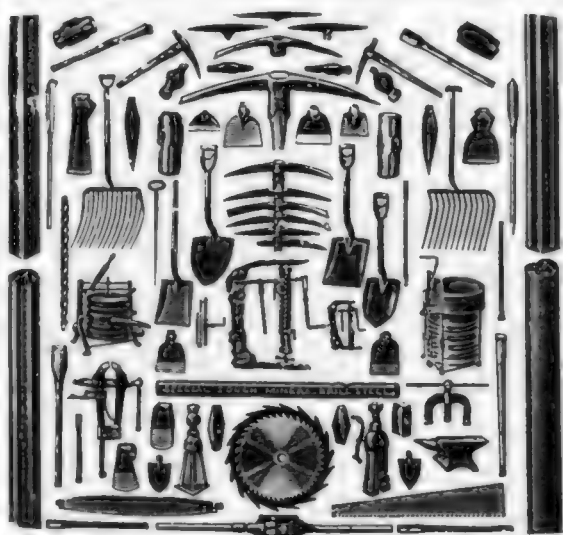
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